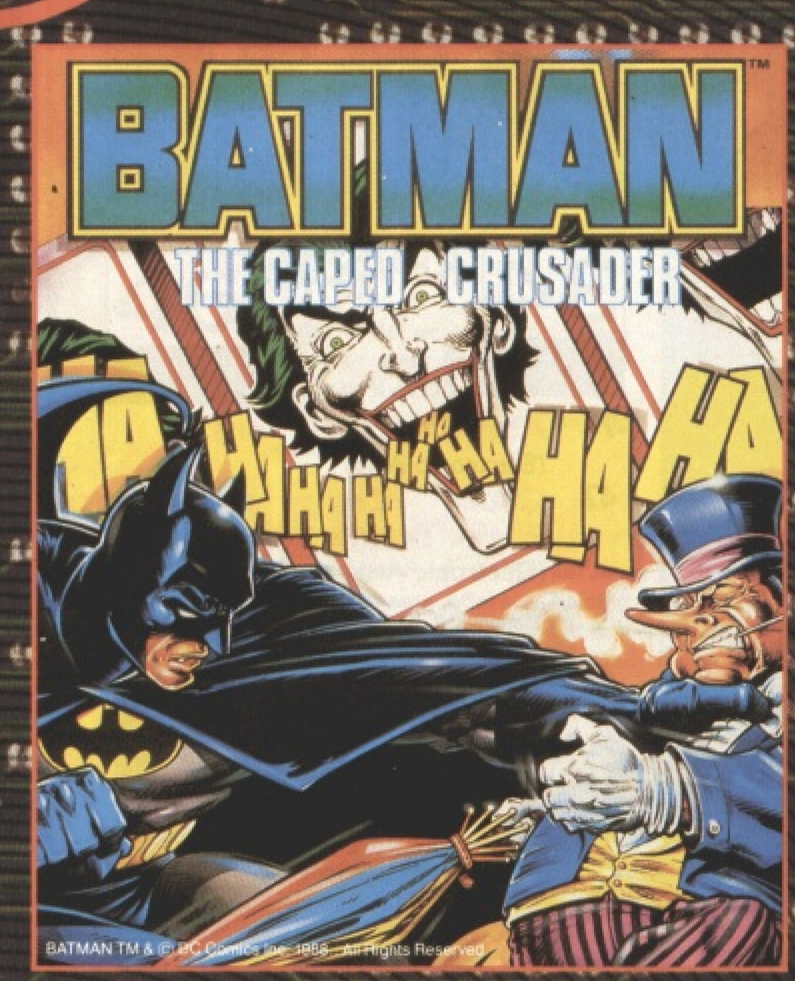

JULY 1989
ISSUE TEN
£1.50
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AN EMAP PUBLICATION
THE One
ATARI ST
AMIGA
PC
FOR 16-BIT GAMES
JEZ SAN'S HAWK
A FLIGHT BEHIND THE SCENES
SMALL SCREEN
BIG HEROES
BATMAN – THE MOVIE
THE UNTOUCHABLES
INDIANA JONES
AND THE LAST
CRUSADE
007 LICENCE TO KILL
DOMARK'S PREMIUM BOND


PLAYFUL
No.1 FOR 3 MONTHS
ROBOCOP
ocean
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BAD DUDES VS. DRAGONNINJA
Imagine ...the name of the game
5 GAME
"the most playable and enjoyable licensed game to date".
New Computer Express 5 star
SIZZLER
"The graphics are slick, the action is tough ... designed to keep you glued to your stick".
ZZAP Sizzler
STA1
"a popular movie license backed up by great game-play, an unbeatable formula – needless to say, I'd buy it ... miss this and you're missing the hottest game of the year".
ST Action STA1
"A sure winner with the official conversion to the home computer".
The Games Machine
"There is more than enough action in this one to keep you coming back for more".
Ace
"a superb game with such addictive gameplay".
Computer Games Week FAB
ATARI ST
CBM AMIGA
BATMAN £19.95 £24.95

INTELLIGENCE

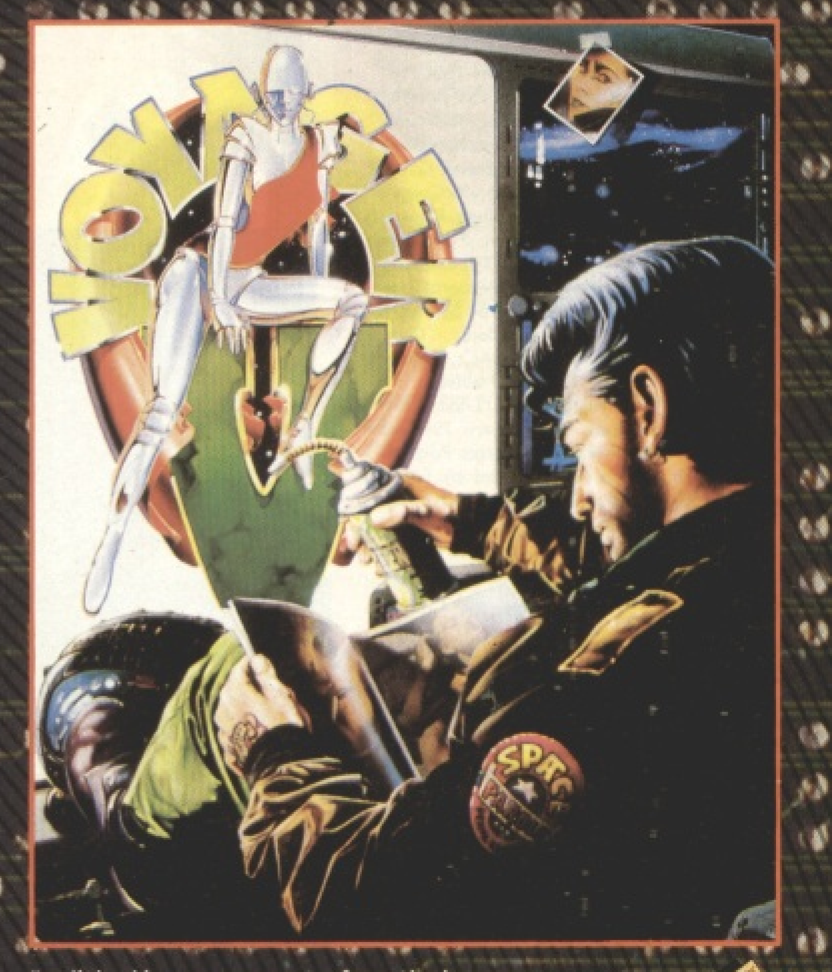


BATMAN TM & © DC Comics Inc. 1988. All Rights Reserved.




"Special FX programmed the game and have done a great job, recreating the character of the originals with a hint of humour".
Amiga User Int.

"The characters and backgrounds are striking – each are superlative – the Amiga features a soundtrack in glorious remixed stereo".
The One



"polished in every aspect – from the humorous storyline to the end of the blasting".
The Games Machine Top Score

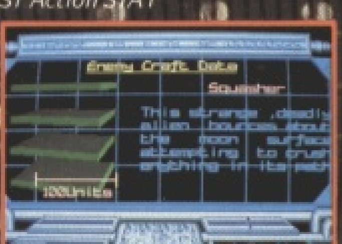
"... you're in for the time of your life ... fabulous 3D, hours of absorbing play – you name it, Voyager's got it. And that's not all: Ocean throw in a cassette soundtrack which has to be one of the most mind-blowing pieces of music I've ever heard".
ZZAP Sizzler

"... scrolling 3D graphics, the most impressive I've seen on the ST ... a great arcade formula and clever graphics ... an excellent game that will keep you playing for quite some time".
ST Action STA1

machine TOP SCORE

SIZZLER

STA1

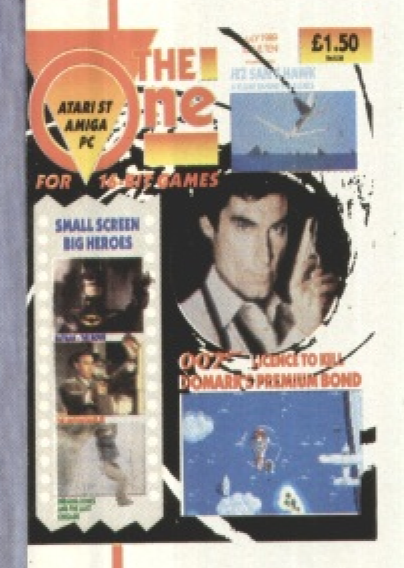






ROBOCOP
DRAGON NINJA
VOYAGER

ATARI ST £19.99
CBM AMIGA £24.99



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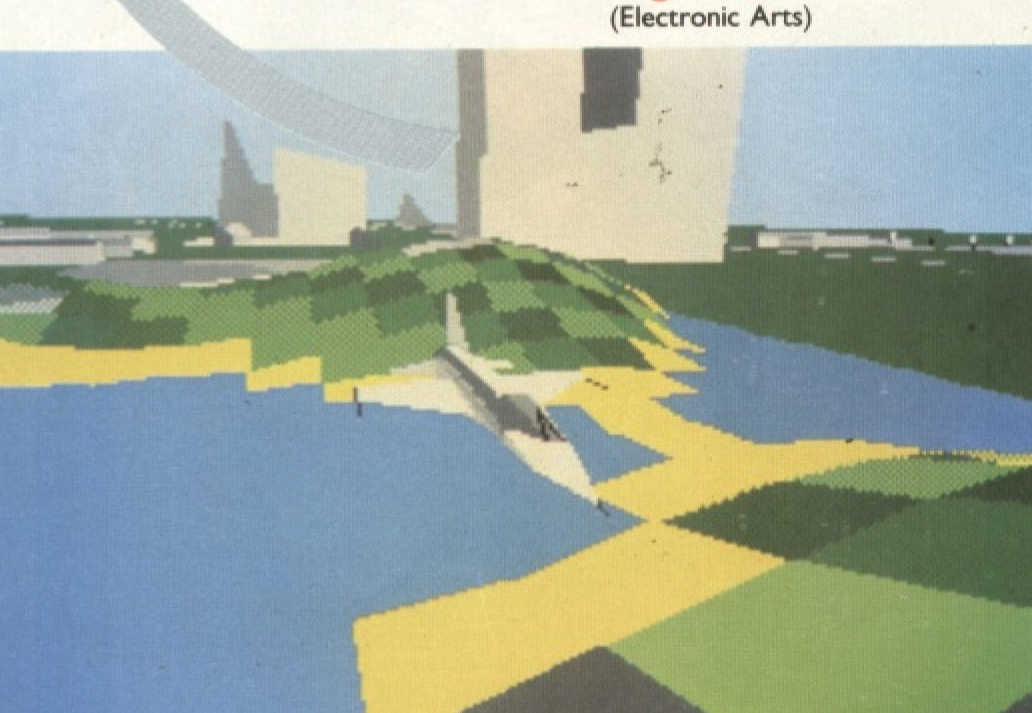
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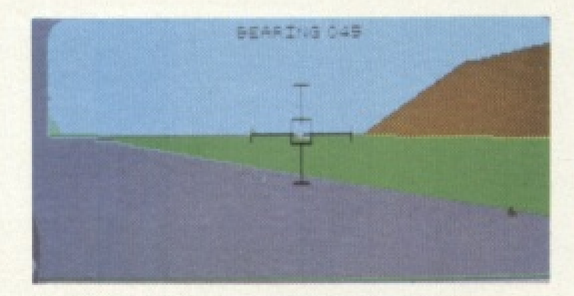
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With special thanks to the folks at CTW and 'uncle' Rod for his hard-nosed journalistic efforts.

CONT







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THE ONE'S GUIDE TO PRICE, RELEASE DATE AND EVERYTHING

You may be used to reading reams of opinionated waffle elsewhere, but here we prefer to let the games speak for themselves. Relevant scenes are shown, with informative captions used to convey the 'feel' of the game in question. At the end of each review there are opinions highlighting any good and bad points, prices, release dates, and ratings where possible. Basically, there's something for everyone – at best a review, and at worst a highly detailed preview. There's nothing clever, just straightforward facts and ratings. Updates will follow where appropriate.

And now the ratings...

GRAPHICS Not necessarily how colourful or well drawn they are, but how well they fit in to the overall effect.
SOUND Again, not necessarily quantity or indeed quality of sound, but how well it's used.
PLAYABILITY How does the game feel? Is it addictive or just plain uninteresting.
VALUE Essentially a reflection of lasting interest – how much game you get for your money.
OVERALL A useful point of reference – essentially a summary of the preceeding ratings.

THIS MONTH'S REVIEWERS

GARY PENN

When he's not basking in the Venetian Sun, Gaz sometimes takes time off to edit the magazine and even manages to squeeze in the odd game-playing session. **Datastorm** provided the thrills for him this month.

CIARÁN BRENNAN

Ciarán hasn't been to Venice – yet – so he's had a little more time to play games this month. Lately, his fancy has been tickled by **The New Zealand Story, Wicked** and **Kick Off.**

PAUL BOUGHTON

Paul's not very good at putting up wallpaper, but excels when it comes to giving it to you straight in his reviews. In between holding barbeques in his back garden, he enjoys lengthy sessions on **Total Eclipse** and **The New Zealand Story.**

BRIAN NESBITT

Brian's always game for a laugh – more so than your average civil servant anyway. Getting down to brass tacks, Brian has this month been spending his ample amounts of spare time playing **Chuck Yeager** and **Thunderbirds.** What a guy!

GARY WHITTA

Gaz is a self-confessed movie bore (for example, he was first with the news that Mel Gibson was going to play Batman?!!?) and nothing pleases him more than a successful 16-bit film adaptation. Needless to say **Licence To Kill** caught his eye this month, along with **The New Zealand Story.**

GORDON HOUGHTON

The latest erstwhile Zzap! editor to seek refuge at the wonderful world of **The One** opts for quick-fire blasts and snappy sports sims when he can, so not surprisingly this month he got a kick out of **Kick Off** and **Xybots.**

KATI HAMZA

The EMAP press-gang strikes again, this time snapping up the former Zzap! Assistant Editor. Kati's recently been whiling away her leisure hours with **Wicked, Kick Off** and **Millennium 2.2.**

LETTERS

LETTERS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

OPERATION LOST

Dear The One,
I bought myself **Operation Wolf** for Christmas, mostly on the recommendation of your reviews. It's an excellent game, and five months on I'm still as keen as ever, but not playing it as much.

However, I recently decided to take it out and load it. It stopped and reset. I thought 'Oh no' and put it back in its box. I learned a few days later that a friend's copy wasn't loading either. I thought that if I kept my disk in a dark place that it wouldn't get corrupted. Is there anyone who is suffering like this?

Andrew Lavin, Harrow, Middx.

Firstly, light has NO effect on disks, so keeping it in a dark place is the same as keeping it superglued to the top of your head. The things that do affect disks are moisture, pressure, heat, dust and magnetic fields. Are you sure there's no loudspeakers or TV's near where you keep your disks? This is the most common source of disk destruction. Of course there is a possibility that the disk was faulty, so maybe it would be a good idea to return it to the shop where it began its short but well loved life.

PSSSST!

Dear Sir,
I live in the USA, California specifically, and enjoy your magazine immensely as the mags out here are mostly geared towards programming and hardware. I just thought I'd mention that the F-19 doesn't exist, except in the USAF's counterintelligence. The actual Stealth Fighter is designated the F-117 (following the F-111, the ones we used to bomb Libya) and resembles a pine cone (no kidding). Look for a back issue of Popular Mechanics (December 1988) for further details.

Alex Corvino, Mission Viejo, California

Listen bub, there's nothing specific about California. You didn't bomb Libya did you? You little tinker. Thanks to your spilling the beans about State secrets, the CIA will be round to see you in a minute, so it's good-bye from us...

YES SIR, NO SIERRA

Dear Sirs,
I am a PC owner. A year ago I visited the USA and had the chance to buy the original **Leisure Suit Larry** game. When I returned to Spain I played for three weeks until I finished it. It was deslightful. Then I tried to buy more Sierra games, but in Spain it's impossible. I will thank you if you answer and tell me any address where I can buy those games.

Sergio Rios Aguilar, Ciudad Universitaria, Madrid.

Wahaay! The One becomes International Rescue, solving problems worldwide... The Sierra On-Line range is marketed in this country through Activision, who can be contacted by writing to: Blake House, Manor Farm Road, Reading, Berks, RG2 0JN. If that's too much trouble you can phone the company on (0734) 311666.

MY COMPUTER'S BIGGER THAN YOUR – PART 406

Dear Sir,
Currently I am an owner of a Sinclair Spectrum +2. I am thinking of upgrading to a 16-bit machine. I am wondering which machine, the Atari ST or Commodore Amiga, is superior?

Stephen Lovell, Cannock, Staffs.

Dear The One,
The 'My Computer Is Better Than Yors' debate is totally irrelevant. Whatever computer a person has, they will say theirs is the best. I am an ST owner and I will admit that the Amiga is an enhanced machine with better sound, graphics and scrolling.

Patrick West, Kensington, London.

Dear The One,

1. Why do the sprites and graphics look squashed and tubby on the Amiga?
2. Why is the sound on the Atari so much more pleasing to the ear?
3. Why is the Atari so easy to use compared with the Amiga?

Could I state that I'm not biased in favour of either machine, as I own both.

JEFF, North Shields, Tyne and Wear.

Dear Sir,
I am writing to say that I am fed up with people thinking that just because they have an Amiga they're the best. I am talking of course about Alan Johnstone in the May issue. He says he dislikes the ST version of **Rainbow Islands** and dislikes the idea of it being put onto the Amiga. He seems to me to be a show-off, saying that he's bursting to tell everyone he's got one. I'm not just saying this, as I own both an Amiga and an ST and I think there is little difference between them except for the sound on the Amiga is better. I've only got one more thing to say... Alan Johnstone GROW UP!!!

W Hansford, Poole, Dorset.

Well! There you have it. The Amiga isn't very good and neither is the ST... or is it the other way around? Or maybe it's that the Amiga is only good if you own both machines, and if Alan Johnstone grew up then the ST would be easier to handle and games wouldn't be ported from one machine to the other. Why is it that PC owners are smug in the knowledge that everybody hates them and their machines, so they don't bother arguing. Tsk! The whacky world of computers, eh?

I JUST CALLED TO SAY...

To Whoever,
I think you mag (The One) is great.

Michael Poolman, Bristol, Avon.

Thanks, Mike, we were wondering which mag we were.

ARCH ENEMIES

Dear The Two... Sorry, The One????!
Please, please, please don't have the Archimedes 'Archie' A3000 in your magazine. I won't buy this magazine if you do!!

Timo Newton-Syms, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks.

Hah! Too late sucker! Check out the spectacular Archie review in this issue and eat your liver. Funnier still, you'll have to buy this issue because your letter is in it (chortle).

MORE GRAPHIC DETAILS

Dear The One,
What can I say except perhaps magic, brilliant, a stroke of sheer genius plus interesting and enlightening. Yes I'm writing about your new article 'Grafix'. At last someone has realised that a lot of people have graphics packages but don't know how to use them to the full. I for one.

But my main question is, why is there no literature on computer graphic techniques? After all there are hundreds on programming the machines!

Andrew Lawton, Leicester.

Our graphics man Phil South wholeheartedly agrees with you about the lack of any decent graphics literature, although he says there is a small selection to be found – if you look hard enough. There are a couple of graphics-related titles in the ***Compute!*** *range of books and as well as the ageing* ***How To Use Deluxe Paint****, but not a great deal else. Perhaps the best place to seek these and other titles out is at a specialist computer book store such as Books Etc. Phil says he'd love to write a graphics manual, but until he gets his big break you'll just have to keep reading Grafix won't you?*

NORTY NORTY

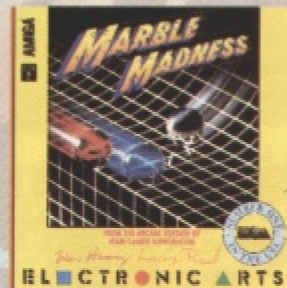
Dear Sir,
In the **Operation Wolf** review in the December issue, you stated that the M60 machine gun is capable of firing 4,550 rounds a minute when it can actually fire only 600 rounds a minute. This may seem like a trivial point, but I feel that such a good magazine should be put right.

Scott Russell, Carluke, Scotland

We were wondering which of you would be the first to catch that one – congratulations Scott, you've won yourself one of Gary Penn's old nightdresses (if you call into the offices between the hours of 7.00 and 8.00 am to collect it). It's come to our attention of late that some of you readers haven't been paying enough attention, so we slipped that little teaser in to see which of you was most awake – so come on guys, take a leaf out of Scott's book and start to take this magazine reading lark a little more seriously.

Software Classics

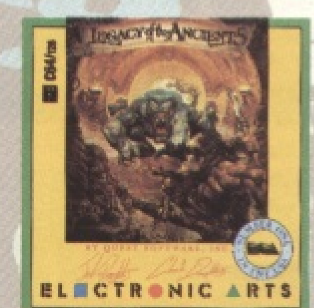
COLLECTABLES



"Game of the Year Finalist" British Micro Computing Awards

"If ever there were a game that could be accurately dubbed arcade quality, this is it." – PCW

Amiga, PC, Atari ST, C64/D

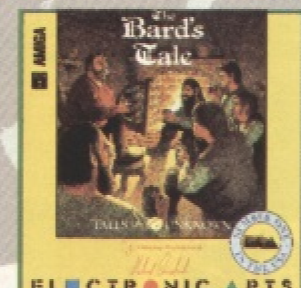


"Legacy of the Ancients is the best role playing game"—Commodore Computing International

"9 Endurance, 8 Toughness, 8 Overall"—Commodore User

C64/D, NEW on PC





"Adventure Game of the Year" – Computer Leisure Awards '88

"9/10" – Your Sinclair, "90%" – Amstrad Action

Amiga, Atari ST, PC, C64 C/D, Spectrum & Amstrad



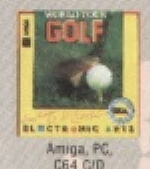
"4/5 Value, Graphics, Appeal" – PC Plus,

"85%" "Skyfox II is great." – *TGM*

Amiga, C64/D, PC, NEW Atari ST

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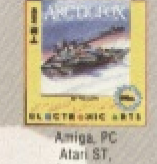
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Amiga, PC, C64 C/D



C64 disk



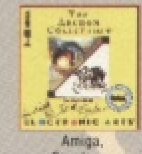
Amiga, PC Atari ST, Spectrum, Amstrad, C64 C/D



C64 /D NEW, IBM PC



Atari ST



Amiga, Spectrum, Amstrad, C64 /D

Software Classics

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● Metal copper hangs on to grab record! ● Volleyball floats across the Channel! ● Interactive movie signs up ● Movie mania hits Mancheste

OCEAN RIDES THE CREST OF A WAVE

CHAMPAGNE flowed and backs were slapped all over Manchester last month as Ocean Software's tin-clad hero **RoboCop** smashed a four-year record by topping the charts for a phenomenal 18 weeks. The previous record holder was 1985's **Softaid** compilation.

However, there seems to be little danger of the firm resting on its not inconsiderable laurels, as a strong line-up of coin-op and film licences, complemented by a liberal sprinkling of 16-bit only original titles, makes the release schedule for the rest of this year the strongest it's ever had.

Starting the ball rolling (or, more correctly, bouncing) at the end of July will be **Volleyball**, the first in a series of sports simulations programmed by Ocean's French division, the team behind last year's conversions of **Operation Wolf**.

Volleyball – which will in time be joined by a **Football** simulation – promises to feature a similar presentation style to that seen in Cinemaware's **TV Sports** range, although how it compares in the gameplay stakes remains to be seen.



As interactive as Cinemaware? You can make up your own mind when The Lost Patrol **finds its way to your local software emporium in October.**



Impressive French presentation and hectic two-player action in the first of Ocean's cross-channel sports simulations, Volleyball.

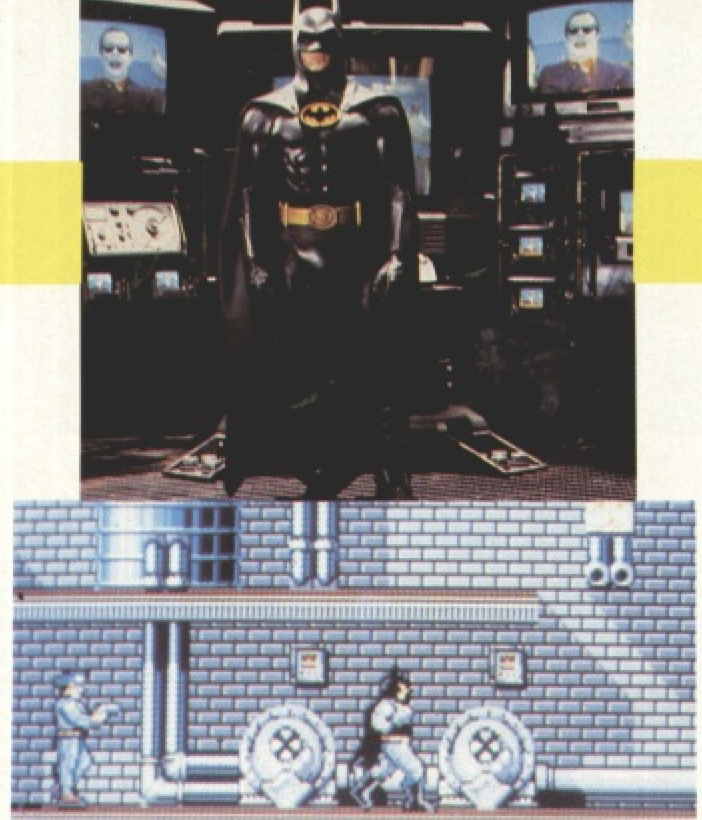
August will see the results of another project from Ocean's French 'maision de developement', the 16-bit conversions of Konami's **Cabal** (contradictory to last month's report, Liverpool-based Special FX will only be handling the 8-bit versions).

Ocean's French wing is also working on an interpretation of the classic romantic novel **Ivanhoe**. Little is known about this project as yet, but an innovative and impressive graphic style is promised.

The PC show in late September will see the release of the first B-I-G licence – the 16-bit interpretations of the forthcoming **Batman The Movie**. The film is premiered here in August, with the game hitting the streets soon after.

MONSTER MASH

Almost two years after the licence was first snapped up, Activision's conversion of Bally/Midway's cult coin-op Rampage **is at last available on the Amiga. All the coin-op's features are included, including the three-player mode (although no concession has been made for four-way joystick adaptors). It's out now at a price of £24.95.**



Cinematic capers as the Caped Crusader fights the forces of evil in Batman The Movie.

Closely following the movie's plot, the game will feature five separate sections, including an arcade adventure, a horizontally scrolling race game and some more brain-teasing elements. The game design is already complete and programming work is underway, but Ocean's in-house programming team still has a lot of hard graft ahead.

In a more strategic vein, October's **The Lost Patrol** is described as a game in the Cinemaware 'interactive movie' vein, linking a combination of arcade sub-sections with an overriding strategy element.

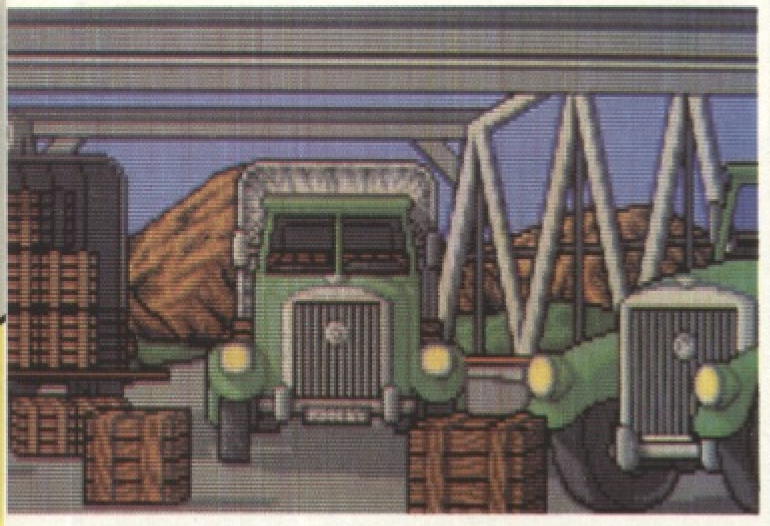
Taking the role of a grunt stranded behind enemy lines, your aim is to return safely to US-occupied territory. Along the way you'll come up against napalm attacks, furious villagers who don't take too kindly to your presence and numerous booby traps like the deadly Punji Pits and enemy ambushes.

As usual, the biggest names are being held back to hit the all-important Christmas market, with **The Untouchables** and Taito's **Chase HQ** heading the line-up. The blockbusting race and chase coin-op is currently being converted by Ocean's in-house team, while Elliot Ness and company are in the capable hands of Special FX.

Finally there's **Operation Thunderbolt**, the sequel to the game that dominated last year's Christmas charts. This project is also in the hands of Ocean's long-suffering in-house coders, with work already underway (watch out for more details in a forthcoming Work In Progress feature).

Next year's line-up is understandably a lot less certain, but one title that should make an appearance early in 1990 is Ocean's first venture into the flight simulation market. The as-yet-untitled combat simulation is being written by a mysterious programmer who spent six months researching current Air Force technology.

Elliot Ness and his Untouchables intercept a convoy of illicit booze on the US/Canadian border.



TOP TEN

(Month Ending June '89)

AMIGA

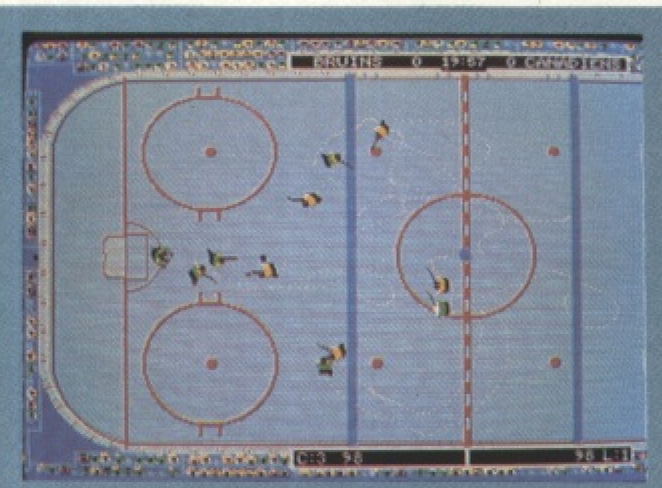
Pos	Last	Title
1	1	POPULOUS (Electronic Arts)
2	NE	BLOOD MONEY (Psygnosis)
3	NE	THE RUNNING MAN (Grandslam)
4	NE	KICK OFF (Anco)
5	NE	LORDS OF THE RISING SUN (Mirrorsoft/Cinemaware)
6	NE	BATTLEHAWKS 1942 (US Gold/Lucasfilm)
7	NE	BATTLETECH (Activision/Infocom)
8	8	THE DUEL: TEST DRIVE II (Accolade)
9	5	SWORD OF SODAN (Gainstar/Discovery)
10	NE	SILKWORM (Virgin)

Compiled exclusively for The One by SOFTWARE CIRCUS LTD. The Plaza on Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON W1N 9DP. Tel: 01 436 2811.





Cinemaware's Lords Of The Rising Sun lashes its way into the Number Five slot.



PUCK OFF

Stateside hockey star Wayne Gretzky is now the star of his very own Hockey game, programmed by Bethesda Softworks. Recently voted Sport Simulation Of The Year by the US Software Publishers Association, Wayne Gretzy Hockey **is now available over here on the Amiga courtesy of Active. The asking price is £29.99.**

NEWS: Indiana Jones is a daddy's boy! Not one, but two games!

KEEP UP WITH THE JONESES

WITHOUT doubt one of the most successful cinema characters of all time is Indiana Jones. First dreamed up in 1977 by Steven Spielberg and George Lucas as a tribute to the classic Saturday Morning adventure serials of the 40s, the intrepid archeologist's first two adventures, **Raiders Of The Lost Ark** and **Indiana Jones and The Temple Of Doom** broke box-office records worldwide, and today both still feature prominently in the Top Ten most lucrative films of all time.

Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade, the third and final movie in the trilogy is a return to the classic formula with Indy battling against Hitler's Nazi war machine to save another religious artefact – the Holy Grail. This time, however, Indy is accompanied by his dad, played by Sean Connery who, despite his creaking bones, manages to get his boy out of many a scrape throughout the course of the film.

Indy's latest adventure looks as though it could well top the first two Indy blockbusters in the money-making stakes. Within the first weekend of it opening in the US, the movie had already grossed a staggering $24 million – almost as much as it cost to produce!



US Gold, who holds the rights to **The Last Crusade** is determined to make sure the game is more successful than its last effort–the lacklustre interpretation of the **Temple of Doom** coin-op. So determined, in fact, that two versions have been commissioned. The programming arm of Lucasfilm (the firm that co-produced the movie) is currently working on a **Zak McKracken**-style arcade adventure, but coming more imminently is the arcade-style effort being produced by Tiertex.

Split into four independent sections, the arcade game is platform-and-ladders orientated, with plenty of bullwhip-cracking and Nazi-smacking to provide the action. Each section recreates a key part of the film, including a fight on the rooftop of a speeding circus train and a shootout inside a Nazi Zeppelin. There's also a liberal smattering of digitised scenes and sampled sound from the film.

Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade is set for release on ST, Amiga and PC in early August, by which time just about everyone should be acquainted with the movie (it's premiered here at the end of June). Lucasfilm's adventure-style interpretation will be released on the PC in September, with ST and Amiga versions following later in the year.



TOP TEN

(Month Ending June '89)

ST

1	1	POPULOUS (Electronic Arts)
2	NE	ROBOCOP (Ocean)
3	NE	DRAGON NINJA (Imagine)
4	9	POLICE QUEST 2 (Sierra/Activision)
5	6	DUNGEON MASTER EDITOR (Softex)
6	NE	SILKWORM (Virgin)
7	NE	VOYAGER (Ocean)
8	NE	THE RUNNING MAN (Grandslam)
9	NE	MICROPROSE SOCCER (Microprose)
10	3	KING'S QUEST TRIPLE PACK (Sierra/Activision)

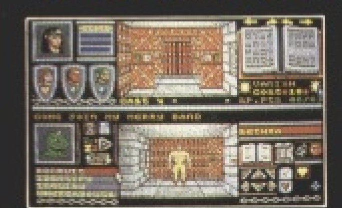
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RoboCop, straight in at Number Two, thanks you for your co-operation.

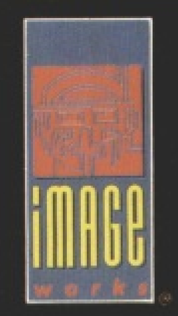
Bloodwych

ARGUE! BARTER! LIE THROUGH YOUR TEETH!!!





Atari ST Screen Shots



Amiga	£24.99
Atari ST	£24.99
Spectrum (tape)	£9.99
Spectrum (disc)	£14.99
Amstrad CPC (tape)	£9.99
Amstrad CPC (disc)	£14.99
Commodore 64 (tape)	£9.99
Commodore 64 (disc)	£12.99

As the people of the Bloodwych awake to a new dawn, they find a stranger in their midst – from one of many races he has come. His task; to halt the demon that lies dormant within the Castle of the Bloodwych.

Unification of the Crystals of Sanguis will secure the Behemoth in his lair for all eternity. Should they remain separate, then he shall rise to bring darkness into the world.

This unique role-playing fantasy game allows greater interaction with the environment than has ever been seen before. Argue, barter, negotiate – even lie through your teeth! The fully implemented personalities of all the characters in Bloodwych allows a rich style of role-playing that has only been dreamt of.

With one or two player simultaneous mode, this is the game that you've been waiting for. Bloodwych for those that dare!

NEWS

● Sixteen-bits in your palm!
● Atari's miniature miracle!

KEEP ONE HANDY



A hand-held games console containing a more powerful processor than the Amiga and running 4,096 colours on a 3.5 inch square LCD screen made its debut at this month's Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago.

Developed by Epyx and soon to be sold in the US by Atari, the 'Handy' (or, to give it its formal title, the Portable Colour Entertainment System) is a battery-powered console, only slightly larger than a Psion Organiser.

The system (which uses cartridges the size of credit cards) runs on only a few torchlight batteries and can be networked to 15 similar machines to allow huge multi-player games.

Peter Molyneux of Bullfrog Productions (who was at the show for the US launch of **Populous**) saw the miniature miracle in action and admits that he's never seen anything quite like it before. "I played a demo of **Blue Lightning,** an **Afterburner**-style game, and it was REALLY moving," he enthuses.

Although it's scheduled for a Stateside release this September (among with an initial batch of software including **California Games** and **Impossible Mission**), the Handy is unlikely to reach these shores until Christmas.

But despite the ecstatic reaction, there are as yet no plans to either convert existing software for the machine or to develop new Handy-specific product.

Stewart Bell, Microprose's UK boss, describes the console as: "the most exciting thing that I've seen since I've been in the industry" – but still his company has no plans to produce software for the machine as yet.

With the imminent release of a number of 16-bit consoles and a whole range of hand-held games machines, it's difficult to see where the Handy will fit in – however, it's undoubtedly a remarkable techical innovation, and one that we'll be hearing much more about in the near future.



Photo: New Computer Express

SOFT AND CUDDLY

Just out from Loriciels this month on ST and Amiga is Skweek, another in the ever-growing 'Sugar and Spice' sickly-sweet genre. Fluffy sprites and pretty colourful graphics aside, the gameplay boils down to a glorified version of Pac-Man with lovely graphics (a bit like the Pepsi Mad Mix Game really). Definitely one for the kiddies, at an asking price of £19.99.

TOP TEN

(Month Ending June '89)

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

Position	Last month	Title
1	8	JET FIGHTER (Velocity/Paperlogic)
2	5	KING'S QUEST TRIPLE PACK (Sierra/Activision)
3	NE	TRACON (Wesson International)
4	NE	SILPHEED (Sierra/Activision)
5	NE	ROBOCOP (Ocean)
6	NE	FLIGHT SIMULATOR 3 (Microsoft)
7	1	F-16 COMBAT PILOT (Digital Integration)
8	7	688 ATTACK SUB (Electronic Arts)
9	4	SPACE QUEST 3 (Sierra/Activision)
10	NE	OUTRUN (Sega)

Compiled exclusively for The One by SOFTWARE CIRCUS LTD. The Plaza on Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON W1N 9DP. Tel: 01 436 2811.



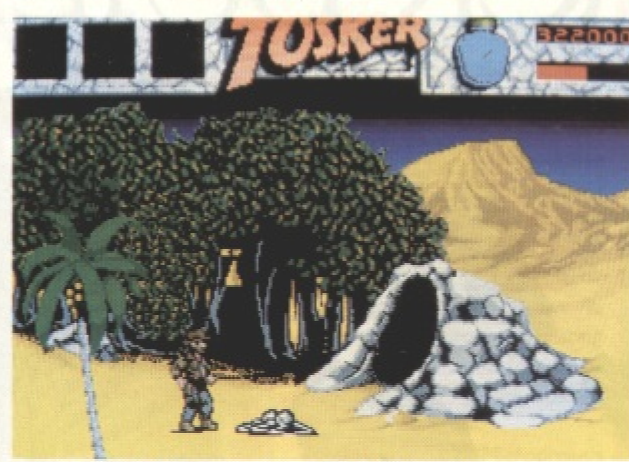
Sega's own conversion of OutRun burns past the opposition and parks at Number Ten.

ALL SYSTEMS G

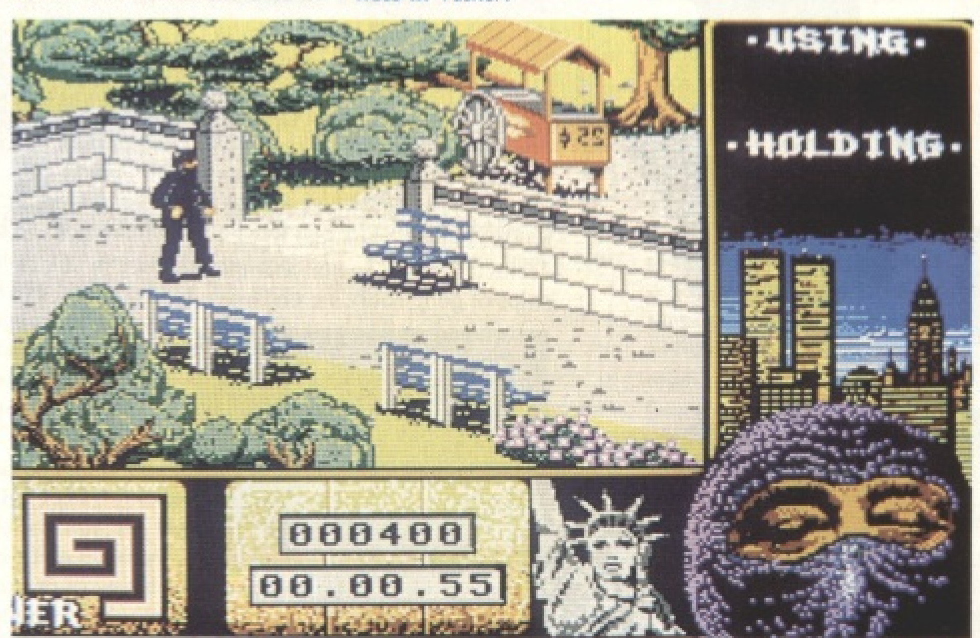
OWNERS of lesser home micros will be familiar with System 3, the company behind such Commodore 64 smashes as **The Last Ninja** and the cunningly entitled **The Last Ninja II**. However, apart from releasing Archer Maclean's superlative **International Karate** + on the ST and Amiga, the company has yet to make its mark on the 16-bit scene.

However, this situation appears to be about to change as the Pinner-based publisher is set to release a veritable flood of product over the remainder of the year.

First in line for release is **Dominator**, the latest in a long line of **R-Type** 'tributes' with all the usual features: upgradable weaponry, fiendish end-of-level nasties and even a vertically-scrolling section a la **Salamander**. System 3 Supremo Mark Cale (a man who spends more money on a pair of trousers than most people do on a car) promises that **Dominator** won't be just another **R-Type** clone: "It'll include that little extra something that makes System 3 games stand head and shoulders above the rest," he claims modestly.



In the jungle, the mighty jungle... our intrepid adventurer attempts a little monkey business in Tusker.

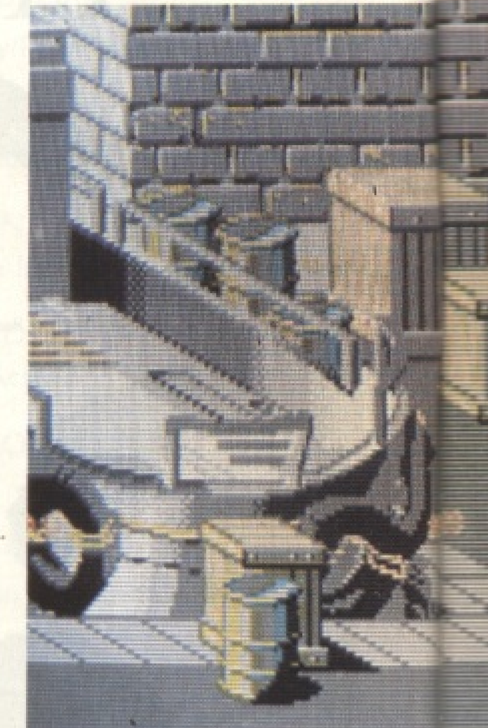


Take to the streets of modern day New York in a martially artistic fight to the death, as the long-awaited Last Ninja II **finally nears completion.**

Following hot on **Dominator**'s heels will come the long-awaited 16-bit conversions of the blockbusting Commodore 64 arcade adventure **The Last Ninja II**. Those of you who've been eagerly awaiting the original **Last Ninja**, will be disappointed to hear that the 16-bit versions were scrapped because Cale didn't consider them good enough for release.

What's probably the first-ever sequel without a predecessor sees an intrepid 13th century Ninja facing the perils of present day New York on a mission to track down a drug-dealing Shogun. The conversion promises to be even more impressive than its original incarnation, boasting vastly improved graphics and sound.

In typically modest fashion, Cale (who's currently looking into the possibilities of having a CarFax installed in all his Ferraris) claims that the gameplay itself won't be changed because the conversion team couldn't find a way to improve upon the original!



The game with the unenviable task of following in **Ninja**'s footsteps is **Vendetta**, a combination of arcade adventure and shoot 'em up action, with some racing thrills and spills thrown in for good measure.

The plot, which casts you as a vigilante searching for a girl kidnapped by a fanatical terrorist group, is split into two specific types – an arcade adventure (which comprises a search for evidence around a flick-screen environment) and a





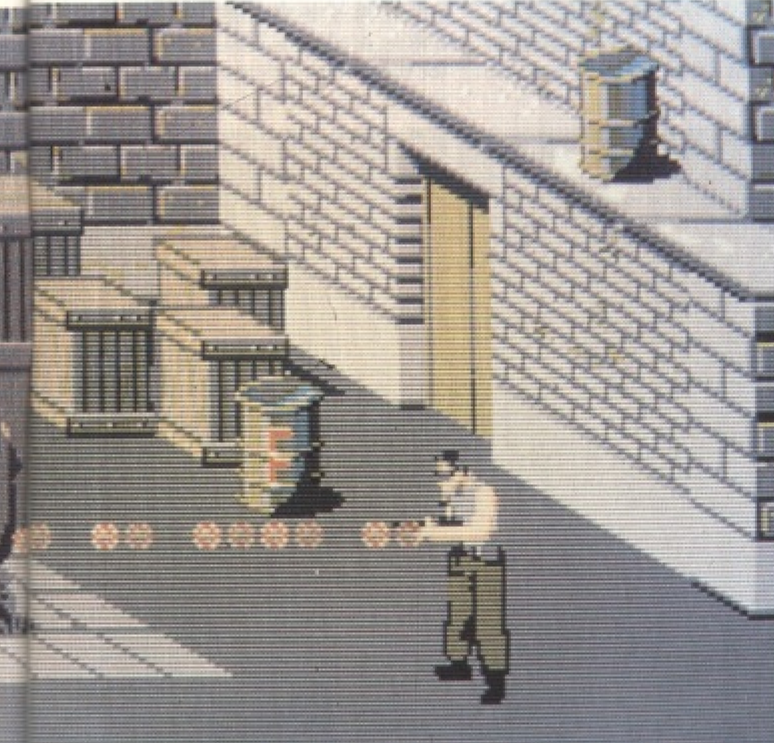
THAT'S THE SPIRIT

After Vindicators, Xybots **and the forthcoming** APB, **the fourth Tengen coin-op licence to come our way courtesy of Domark will be** Dragon Spirit, **a vertically-scrolling shoot 'em up with a mythological flavour. The ST version is pictured here (Amiga and PC versions are also on the way). September should see the release of ST and Amiga versions with PC hopefully following soon after.**

on dancing horse! a atural setting!

GO!





Flex your pecs and prepare to pump a different kind of iron as Vendetta **hits the streets.**



Mark Cale with some of the fruits of a mis-spent youth.

racing section in the style of **Chase HQ** where you pursue escaping terrorists in your highly-fashionable twin-turbo Ferrari.

The final two games, again both arcade adventures, are both due for a Christmas release.

The first of these is **Tusker**, an Indiana Jones type affair with the player exploring the jungles of Africa in glamorous 'Flickscreen-o-vision' in search of the magical graveyard where elephants go to die (hence the title). In your way stands the sweltering heat of the desert (watch that water supply folks) and hordes of irate jungle tribesmen.

Finally, there's **Myth**, a game with a storyline that beats even heroin-dealing Samurai and magical elephants in the weirdness stakes. This one has you travelling through time via warp gates to do battle with weird and wonderful creatures from mythological fantasy.

And before we leave the fabulously wealthy realms of System 3, news has just leaked out that the **Last Ninja II** won't actually be the last Ninja (confused? You will be). **The Last Ninja III** is tentatively scheduled for release in January 1990, although loveable playboy Cale is keeping most of the details quiet. What is certain however, is that it won't be programmed by John Twiddy, the man behind the first two games.



MAD M*A*X

Due for release this Summer is Space M*A*X **from Hewson, the firm's first PC-only game. Written by the aptly-named Final Frontier Software,** Space M*A*X **should hit the streets in August at a price of £34.95. An Amiga version is under development and should follow soon after.**

NEWS

• Africa awaits a French invasion! • Coktel party hits the UK! • Swords, Sorcery and Space Shuttles • Play the zodiac game – in hell!

A FRENCH COLLEC

And now on Rapido we have the amazing terrific and very super Coktel Vision and all their lovely games by our channel tunnel correspondent. So now you know it comes time for me to say, Alors! Salut Maintenant and on with the games...

Coktel Vision is best known in this country for the saucy sprites of **Emmanuelle**; but in France its growth has been based largely on its penetration of the (surprisingly large) educational software market.

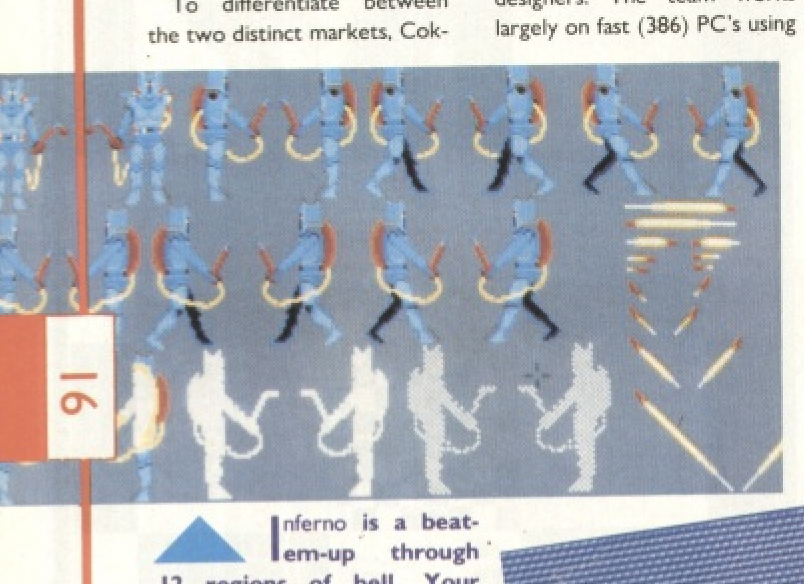
To differentiate between the two distinct markets, Coktel Vision has created a new label, Tomahawk, to carry its games. And the programmers are hard at work on four new releases for the next few months.

All of the games design and graphics are developed at their Paris HQ, where Yanick Chosse runs a team of seven graphic designers. The team works largely on fast (386) PC's using **Deluxe PainT** and an animation package developed in-house, which Yannick describes as being 'better and faster than the animation in **Deluxe Paint III**'. Coktel Vision's programming, however, is carried out 600 miles away in Bordeaux, where Arnaud Delrue runs a team of 12 people, communicating with Paris by means of fax, modem and snail mail.

Coktel Vision's boss Roland Oskian predicts a 50% growth for the company this year – but that all depends on just how

The Legend of Djel is one of those weird and possibly wonderful mixtures of action and adventure game that the French seem to go a bundle on. Designed for the Amiga, ST and PC by Joseph Kluymans, the game casts you as Djel, a benign sorcerer who uses his powers to sort out three rather sticky situations involving famine, plague, lovesick Princesses, evil wizards and the like.





Inferno is a beat-em-up through 12 regions of hell. Your opponents are based on the signs of the Zodiac; so you'll encounter Gemini (pictured at an early stage of development), a pair of twins armed with laser guns; Scorpio, with a vicious sting in the tail; Leo, with claws and teeth; Sagitarius, half robot, half tank. There's no gameplay to see as yet, but the smallish sprite should move pretty quickly.



BLOCKS'N'BULLETS

Before you buy a copy of Hybris on the strength of the 88% review back in Issue Six, bear in mind that July 1st will see the release of a special limited-edition version (5,000 only) called Hybris Arkanoid – a compilation of Discovery's two proudest moments. The price is the same as the standard Hybris – £24.99.

les!

CTION

good the games you can see previewed on these pages turn out to be.

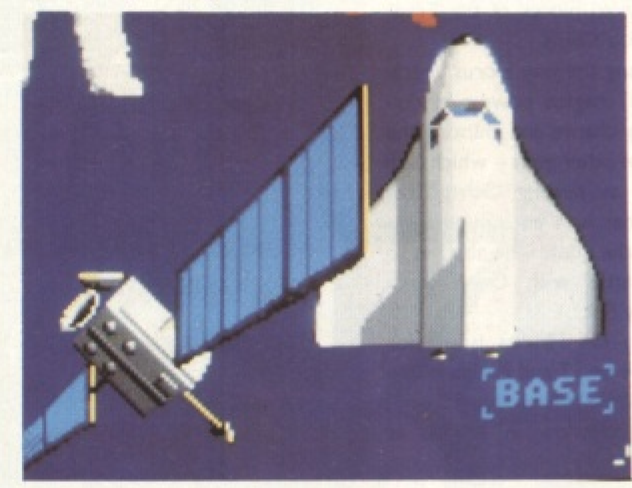
C'est la vie...





African Raiders is nothing to do with tribal battle or colonial invasion, but is a sort of Buggy Boy loosely based on the notorious Paris-Dakar car rally (the one where more spectators die than competitors complete the course). Over four different stages and against four different backgrounds you drive your buggy – along the road if you're the timid sort, or cross-country if you want to steal a march on the opposition. The game zips along pretty nicely, and can be played as a two player game, with one person driving and the other navigating. Obstacles along your way include the largest amount of dead camels you're likely to see this side of an Arabian abattoir...

European Space Shuttle Hermes comes from an original idea by Roland Oskian, who just happened to work on the Space Shuttle program. Coktel has had co-operation from the European Space Agency and Matra in designing the game, which simulates the Shuttle's satellite-planting activities.



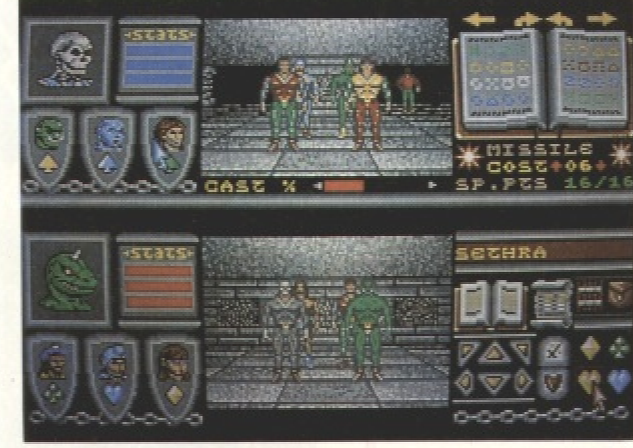
ACTION MAN

Rainbow Arts' latest effort Danger Freak is a novel twist on the sports simulation genre – all the events are so dangerous, that even Indiana Jones' stunt-man would think twice before competing! The events include jetskiing over shark-infested waters, a Super-Sprint style stock-car rally and (a relatively mundane) bicycle motorcross. It's out now at £19.99.

NEWS: *The sincerest form of flattery? • Two-player dragon bashing!*

A REAL MIRROR IMAGE?

Do battle with a bevvy of beasts (and your mates too) in Image Works' forthcoming Bloodwych.



TROUBLE is brewing between publishing giant Mirrorsoft and the fledgling label Impressions over the release of the latter's forthcoming shoot 'em up, **Chariots Of Wrath,** which the Maxwell-owned publisher believes is a little too similar to its own **Xenon II.**

Although the finished product has yet to be seen by anyone outside of Impressions, screenshots released by the company would suggest that there is at least a strong graphic resemblance between the two games.

Neither company was available for comment at the time of going to press, but reports suggest that Mirrorsoft is none too pleased about the apparent plagiarism and may attempt to prevent the program from being published in its present form.

Still with Mirrorsoft, the recent silence of its Image Works Label is about to be broken with the release of **Bloodwych,** a one or two player adventure in the **Dungeon Master** mould.

Designed and programmed by Pete James and Anthony Taglione (formerly of Starlight Software), **Bloodwych's** main innovation is a split-screen display which allows simultaneous two-player games, and consequently a lot of scope for extra strategy.

Players can choose to combine the strengths of their parties as they search for four magical crystals in the dungeons, or go their separate ways and compete against each other – either way there are plenty of spells, traps and creatures to do battle with. **Bloodwych** is released on July 27th on ST and Amiga at £24.99 apiece, with a PC version under consideration.

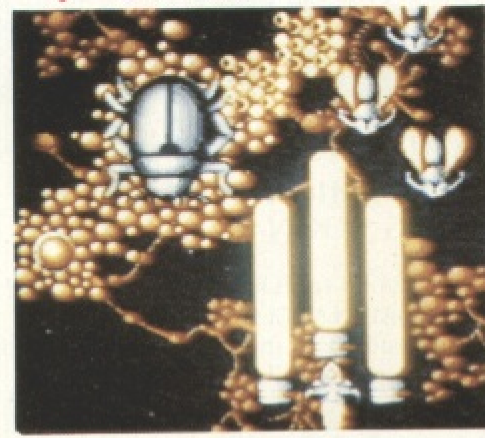
Also coming soon is **Eye Of Horus,** an arcade adventure from Mirrorsoft's newly-signed affiliate label Logotron.

A debut 16-bit development from Denton Designs, **Eye Of Horus** will have a distinctly Egyptian flavour – so much so that it borrows its storyline from the ancient Egyptian legend of Horus. The game endows the player with the ability to transmute between human and feathery form with a quest to find and reconstitute the seven pieces of the Egyptian god Osiris.

Along the way Horus upgrades his magical powers by collecting charms and enlisting the help of other gods – which he'll need, as putting Osiris back together isn't enough to complete the quest – he also has to do battle with Osiris' arch enemy Set.

Eye Of Horus is set for release on ST and Amiga in late July at £24.99, with a PC version to follow in August at £29.99.

Spot the difference... on the left is Chariots of Wrath, **and on the right** Xenon II.





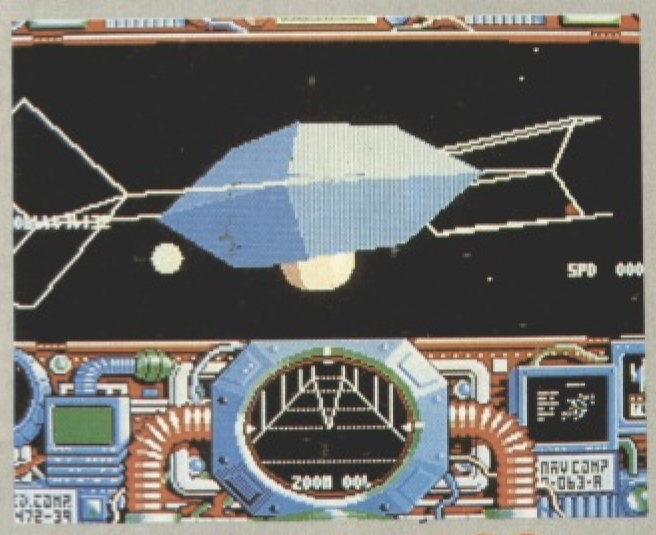
UPDATES

FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS

Gremlin
Reviewed Issue One, pg 18

A Before setting out to produce the Amiga version, author Paul Blythe compiled a list of **FOFT** buyers' grumbles and quibbles, and has rectified all of them, as well as generally chopping and changing the gameplay for the better. Any niggles people may have had about the ST version aren't present here, but graphically it's not quite so fast. On the plus side, the whole kit and caboodle (including the classical theme tune) has been crammed onto one disk.

PRICE	£29.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
OVERALL	89%

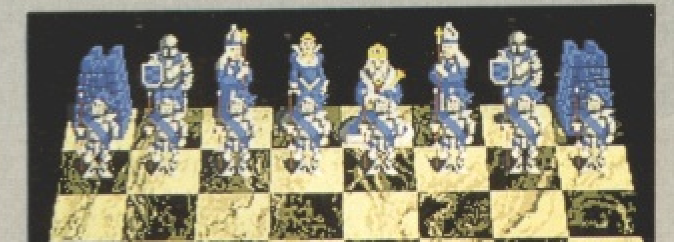


BATTLE CHESS

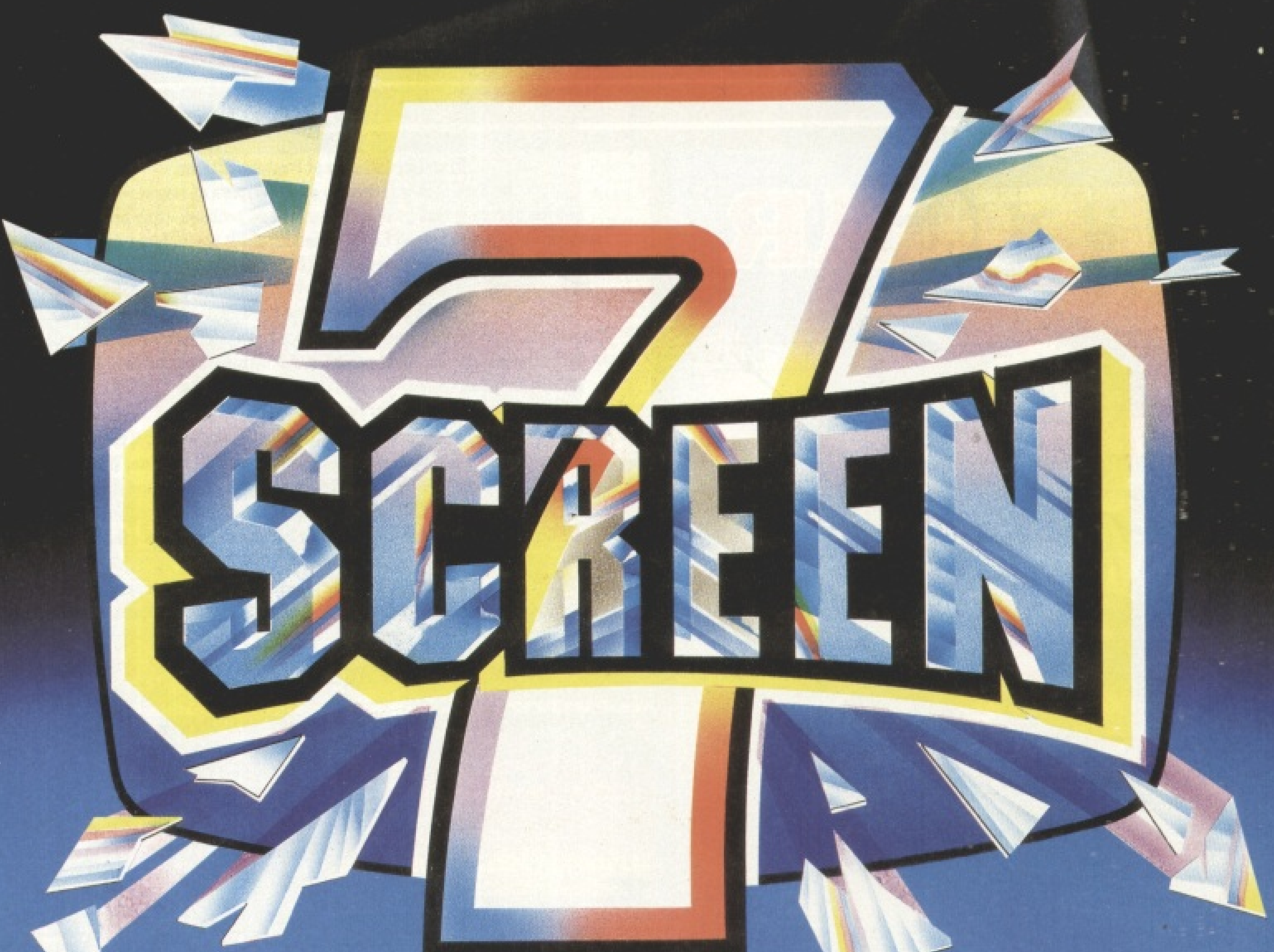
Electronic Arts/ Interplay
Reviewed Issue Two, pg 68

ST Apart from ever-so-slight changes in the board and piece colours (which the differences in the ST and Amiga's colour pallettes made inevitable) graphically there's hardly anything to separate this from its Amiga counterpart. The animations are slightly slower (which is no bad thing as it means you have more time to appreciate them) but the sound is a disappointment – the samples are realistic, but accompanied by a hissing, crackling noise in the background which spoils the effect. Gameplay is, of course, identical (but for some reason it takes slightly longer for the computer to decide its next move) and all the original options (including the two-player modem link-up) are available.

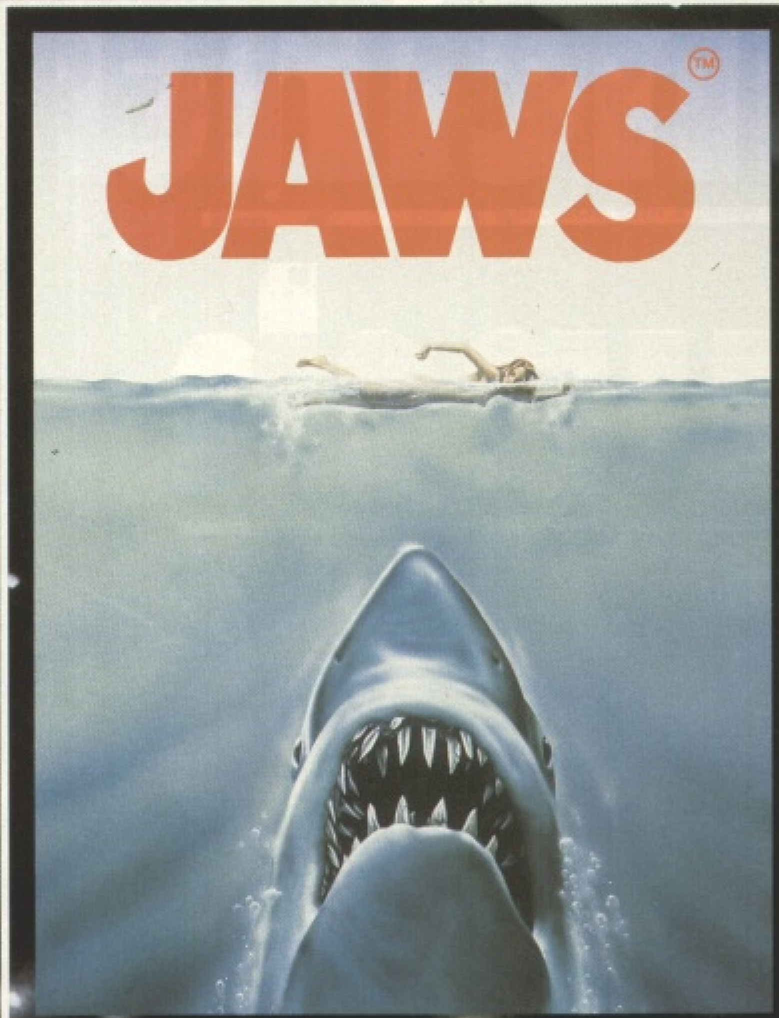
PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
OVERALL	84%




Announcing
the launch
of


7
SCREEN

BIG GAMES ›››



A monstrous great white shark is terrorising the beaches of Amity Island. A grim discovery confirms the worst – he's out there and he's hungry. In a bid to save the Island's falling tourist trade, Mayor Vaughn engages a professional shark killer from the mainland. Unfortunately, en route, a fierce storm wrecks his boat, and the means of JAWS' destruction is scattered throughout the caves and chasms of a menacing sea world.

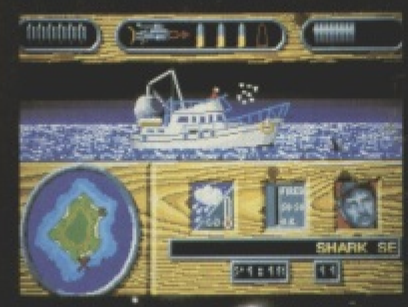
In desperation, Mayor Vaughn turns to you, Police Chief Brody. With your two colleagues, Hooper, the shark expert, and Quint, the manic shark hunter, you set off to retrieve the lethal weapons from the sea bed and kill the unwelcome intruder. Unfortunately, JAWS has other ideas.

Whilst JAWS roams the clear water bringing a swift and horrible end to unwary swimmers, you must undertake hazardous deep sea dives into a world teeming with hostile life and full of unforeseen dangers. To make matters worse, Mayor Vaughn is getting impatient. As the death toll rises, the beaches, essential for the island's tourist trade, get closed. Pretty soon, you may find yourself out of a job. Can you rid Amity Island of its malevolent visitor before it's too late?

JAWS, one of the greatest box office attractions in the history of motion pictures, surfaces for the first time on a computer screen near you.

Mans' deepest fear is back.

NEW FROM SCREEN 7







Marauder. Soldier of Fortune. Hit man.
His business was death – other people's of course – and his currency was gold . . . If there was a problem – any problem – someone else's problem, STEIGAR would make it his problem – at a price. . . . No island fortress was secure. No Embassy was safe. If the gold was right – the job got done. . . . Where he came from, no-one dared ask, but STEIGAR was bound for Hell . . .

Then came capture. The interrogation . . . *"Too useful to eradicate"* the CIA said. Drafted into the US Navy, STEIGAR is trained to be a hit-and-run helicopter pilot. Only the Senior Command know that STEIGAR is no ordinary recruit.

It may be a terrorist training camp that needs wiping out. It may be a military dictator de-stabilising the area who needs attention. When the odds seem impossible, STEIGAR is let loose, dealing death and destruction to the chosen enemy.

STEIGAR used to work for gold, now he works for orders – the job's the same.

STEIGAR is the kind of arcade quality, multi-level, multi-weapon death or glory blast'em up that wrecks joysticks. Dangerous big screen action for the mercenary in you!

NEW FROM SCREEN 7



NEWS

• From Richard Clayderman to Bio Challenge!
• Castle Warrior leads the assault!

DELPHINE IN DEEP





EUROPE opening for business in 1992 may turn out to be a double-edged sword for British software publishers. For although the single market will provide more customers, it will also mean that the cream of continental competition will be muscling in on these shores – and smart money will no doubt tip France's latest hit house Delphine Software to take a piece of that action.

Delphine has only recently sprung to the British public's attention, with the signing of a distribution deal with Palace Software and the immediate release of **Bio Challenge.** However, the company has been toiling away for over a year now and has a formidable line up of product slated for release before the end of the year.

The first, **Castle Warrior** is an unadulterated arcade romp, split into six levels joined together by short animated sequences. The story tells of your quest to find and kill a dark wizard, Zandor, who has poisoned your father and is the only person in possession of the necessary antidote.

In a style somewhat similar to **Dragon's Lair** (albeit with a far greater playability factor), the tasks set include defeating and avoiding fearsome beasts, guiding a canoe through a stalagtite-ridden cavern, an air-borne duel fought out astride a winged dragon (reminiscent of **Space Harrier,** or the dog-fight section in **Rocket Ranger**) and an ultimate face-off with the dark side's champion.

The gameplay was still in need of work at the time of going to press, but the graphics and sound are both remarkable, with the main sprite due a special mention for both its size and fluid animation.

Although in a totally different vein to **Bio Challenge, Castle Warrior** displays the same polished presentation and carefully crafted gameplay as its high-flying predecessor. Scheduled for an imminent release, **Castle Warrior** looks like it's going to be a 'must' for home arcadesters.

▲ **Zandor makes an early appearance in** Castle Warrior.

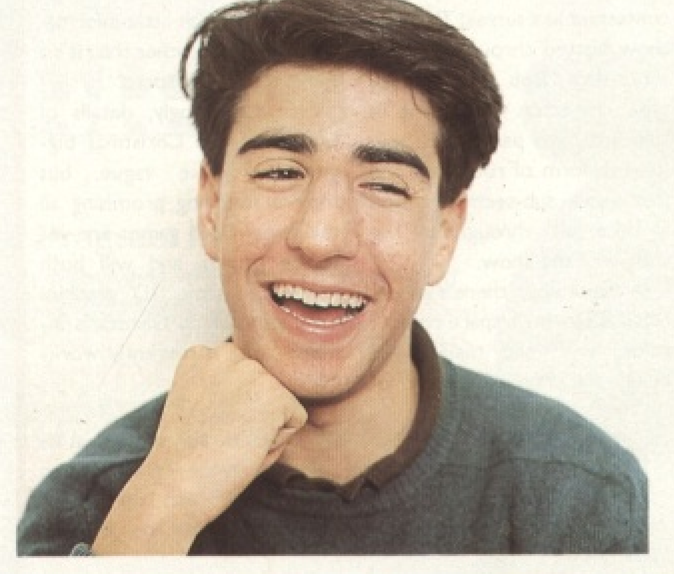


Castle Warrior's **canoeing section sees the intepid adventurer avoiding whirlpools and protecting himself from the falling stalagtites – so much for the quiet life.** ▶

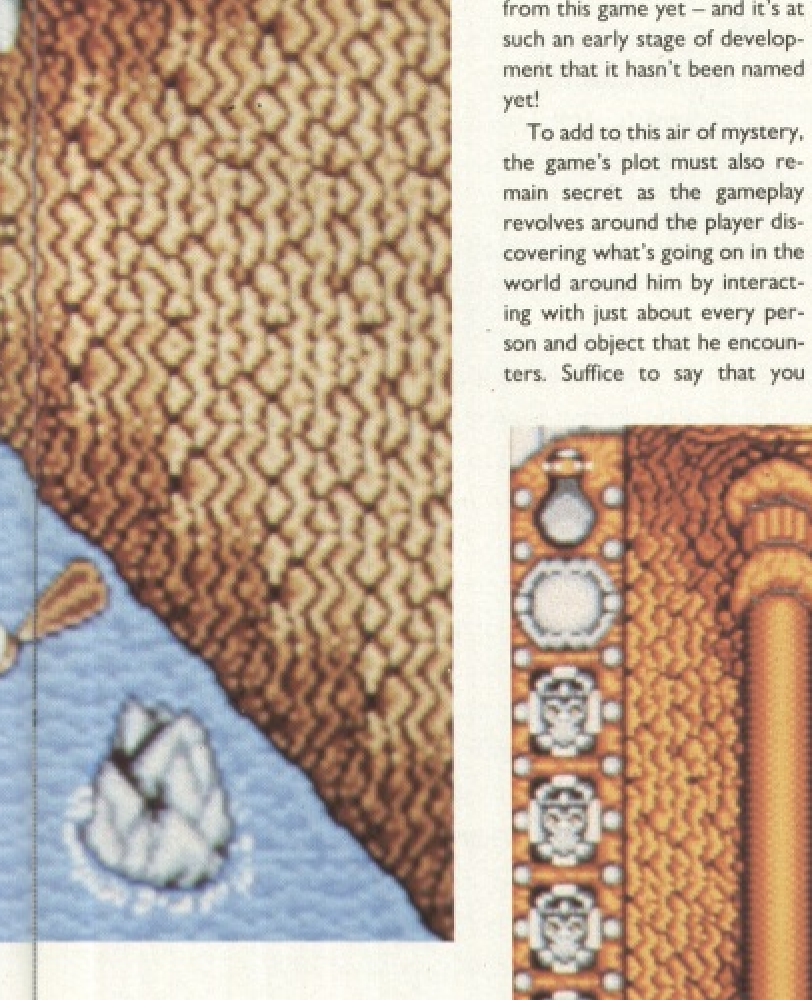


● Lucky leaps the channel!
● First show for graphic adventure!

The so-far unamed graphic adventure makes use of only two text menu! Every other action, including moving the main character from place to place is carried out via the mouse.



Delphine's prodigious manager, 19 year-old Michael Sportouch has already edited France's leading 16-bit magazine – and written Elite's Amiga Space Harrier... coo!



In a more cerebral vein, Delphine's next release will be an animated adventure in the **King's Quest** mould. This is something of a world exclusive for readers of The One, as no-one else has seen a single pixel from this game yet – and it's at such an early stage of development that it hasn't been named yet!

To add to this air of mystery, the game's plot must also remain secret as the gameplay revolves around the player discovering what's going on in the world around him by interacting with just about every person and object that he encounters. Suffice to say that you start as a window cleaner and go on to travel through time.

Although programmer Paul Cuisset (the mand behind **Bio Challenge**) is only two months into the job, his completely mouse-controlled adventure is already shaping up nicely and looks set to successfully take on the Sierra On-Line range.

This unnamed adventure will see the light of day at September's PC Show, and will eventually be followed by a whole series of similar games utilising the same development system.

Delphine's final game of the year will be its Christmas release, **Lucky.** Details are vague as yet, but it looks like being a form of 3D **Pac-Man** with fully animated characters and a Yuletide feel.

So it looks as though Delphine could succeed where Napoleon failed and stage a British invasion over the coming year. And if you feel like involving yourself in a little fraternisation, why not pop along to the Palace stand at this year's PC Show and say 'bonjour'.

The armoured action man finally meets Zandor in Castle Warrior.



NEWS: • Targhan unsheathfs his blade! • Mad for summer schedule!

GAIN WITHOUT PAIN



Bulging biceps and Barbaric battles in Gainstar's forthcoming Targhan.

Gainstar, which has recently made the transition from distributor to fully-fledged software publisher, is hoping to stamp its name firmly in the industry with a choc-a-bloc line-up of releases scheduled for the next six months.

First to hit the shelves will be **Targhan** from French software house Silmarils. Like the company's previous release, **Manhattan Dealers, Targhan** is essentially a beat 'em up, this time in the **Sword Of Sodan** mould, with plenty of long waving hair and bursting biceps to set the scene for the sword-slaying action.

The game takes place in a medieval world over 140 screens large, inhabited by 40 different types of creature – some more friendly than others.

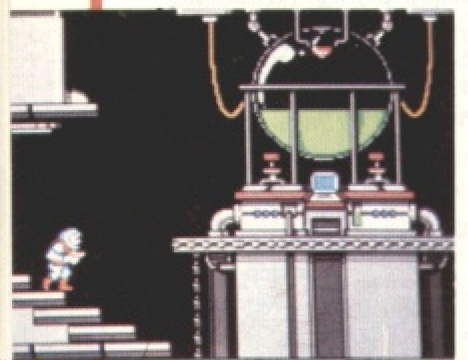
Targhan should be released within the next week on all three formats, priced at £19.99 for ST and PC and £24.99 for the Amiga.

Silmarils next release, **Mad Show** is due to appear later in July, again on all three formats.

This one casts the player as a contestant in a surreal TV game show hosted throughout by a super-slick Bob Monkhouse-type character. The game is split into two parts: the show itself (a form of roulette), and four arcade sub-sections played at intervals throughout the course of the show.

In September there's an untitled **Elite**–style space combat game, with the main twist being the complete lack of vector graphics, filled or otherwise. Instead the programmers are opting to design and draw all the spaceships in the game by hand! Also scheduled to appear at roughly the same time is **Last Raiders Of Wind,** on which little information is available other than it's a shoot 'em up of sorts.

Not surprisingly, details of Gainstar's two Christmas biggies are quite vague, but they're sounding promising all the same. Both games are yet to be named, and will both utilise the same 3D graphics technique which Gainstar's in-house team is currently working on.



You've read about what's to come, now here's one that's already here – Alien Legion, an enjoyable mish mash of shoot 'em up action and arcade adventure. It's available now on ST and Amiga at £24.99.

ON THE PISTE

The fact that we're enjoying one of the hottest Summer's in memory seems to have escaped The Edge, as its second lucrative Garfield licence brings everybody's favourite feline to alps of all places! Winter's Tail features all the original characters, solving a series of ski-orientated puzzles. The ST version should be available soon at £19.99, with the Amiga to follow at £24.99

SHORT STORIES

A brief guide to forthcoming releases, delayed projects and work in progress.

▶ The latest of this year's sure-fire box-office blockbusters has been snapped up by Activision. The long-awaited sequel to **Ghostbusters,** imaginatively titled **Ghostbusters II,** re-unites Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and Sigourney Weaver in another spook-tastic adventure. The movie isn't premiered in the US until later this Summer, and won't be seen here until later on in the year, but Activision's in-house programming team is already beavering away on the 16-Bit interpretations, due for release at Christmas.

▶ US Gold has acquired the licence to convert Sega's multi-directional two-player scrolling shoot 'em up **Crack Down** (see Arcades, Issue Seven) and **Forgotten Worlds** conversion team Arc Developments is working to a New Year deadline.

▶ Contradictory to what you may have been led to believe, an ST version of Readysoft's 1Mb Amiga hit **Dragon's Lair** IS definitely in the pipeline. Like the Amiga, the ST interpretation will occupy six disks, but due to the differences in the memory capacities of Amiga and ST drives, only half of the action sequences that make up the game itself will be present. Readysoft is beavering away on the project now, and the finished product should be available sometime in the new year.

▶ In between moving into a trendy playboy apartment in the country, complete with a swimming pool, tennis court, and six acres, IK+ author Archer Maclean is tinkering with a **3D Snooker** simulation, which, he declares modestly, "will knock the s#!t out of **3D Pool.** There'll be an awful lot more playability and more on screen." Unfortunately we won't be able to judge for ourselves until the beginning of 1990 – at the earliest!

The BEST* Just Got Even Better!

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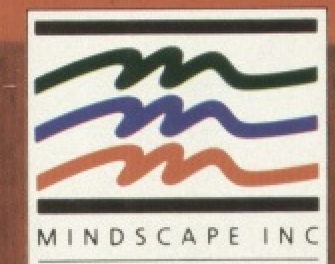
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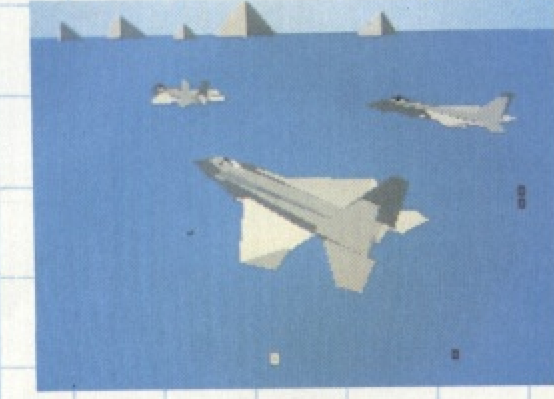
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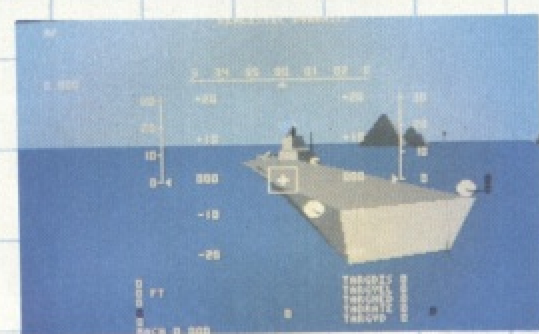
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WORK IN PROGRESS

HAWK





One of the most impressive pieces of graphics in the game, looks to be the 'patchwork' as they call it at Argonaut. The undulating landscape between major cities is constructed of patchwork squares of various green tones, not unlike the landscape in Virus. Just outside one of the cities is this active volcano. Note: don't land in here (good safety tip that).

Just when you thought it was safe to use a flight simulator again, Jez San and his Argonauts produce Hawk, a whole world on a disk. Phil South catches the team hard at work and hits Jez himself with a few probing questions...

Jez San needs little introduction to most 16-bit computer users. He's not only the writer of the first big game on the ST, **Starglider,** but also one of the most outspoken champions of the Amiga as a development machine.

He's to be found on the CIX bulletin board service fielding queries from Amiga users from all over the country and is a fervent worker on the behalf of Amiga developers, the people who produce soft and hardware for the Amiga.

Argonaut was built around Jez after his success with **Starglider** on the ST. Having produced the game for all formats, and then **Starglider 2** and Activision's **Afterburner** for Amiga and ST, the team has returned to a product, which in many ways is their oldest product of all. This isn't as cock-eyed as it sounds. **Hawk** has been in production for many years in different forms, and worked on in between other projects ever since Argonaut has been in existence.

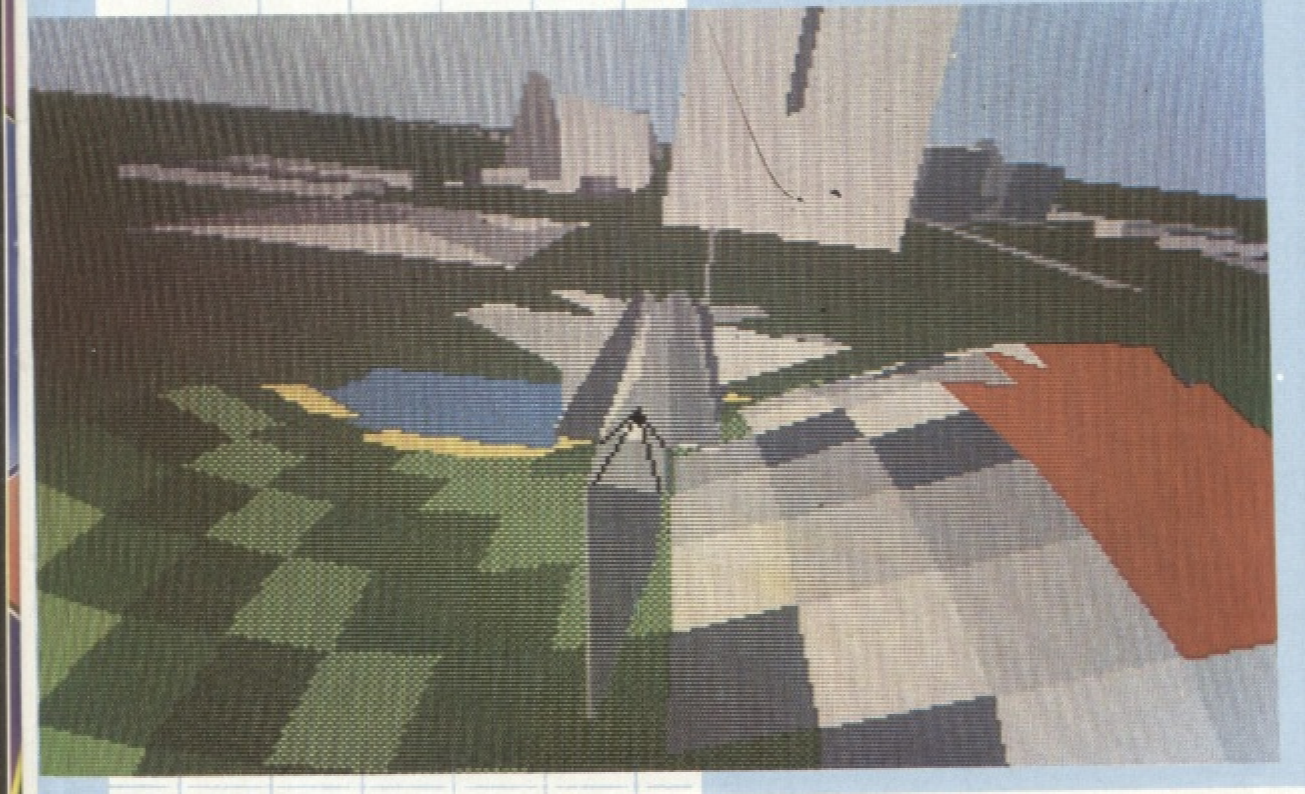
So now it's early June, and Electronic Arts has been waiting for Hawk to be finished for a year. True to form, Argonaut is still perfecting the program, but neither they nor EA seem too worried by it being late. It seems they'd rather it was the best thing ever than merely ready in time for some spurious deadline.

How long has Hawk really been in production then, Jez? "Good question. A long time, far too long. It was started before **Starglider 2,** I think. But recently it's had a lot more manpower put on it to get it out the way. It's been a very big project."

So big in fact that in recent months Jez has had to take people off other 'hush hush' projects they're working on to work on the maths for **Hawk:** "Most people in the company have done a small part, but recently everyone's been on it."

The team that's put so much toil into **Hawk** are Peter Warnes, Chris Humphries, Ian Crowther, Paul Reid, and Danny Emmett. Danny has worked exclusively on the graphic design of the enormous amount of objects in the game.

As Jez puts it: "Everybody picks a forté that contributes to the final project. At the moment we have Pete working on graphic maths, shading and stuff, Chris working on simulation maths, Paul working on map design and also his own map designer program to help him do that, Ian working on mission design and weapons loading routines, and Richard Clucas, our software manager, is on I/O routines which he largely



inherited from **Starglider 2.** So **Hawk** is everything **Starglider 2** was in terms of technology, plus another few years more work, plus a totally different game scenario."

MAP ATTACK

Hawk will be notable for many things, not least of which will be its map, which could prove to be one of the largest in game history. Paul Reid gleefully showed me his mind-boggling map designer program, and brought up a display of squares, a complex tracery of wiggly lines with hundreds of minute cyan boxes on it. "See those boxes..." he said, "they are all airports that you can land on."

The map was originally larger than its current huge dimensions, but as Jez comments it was recently shrunk to give the team greater precision. "I believe now the map is 1,024 kilometres by 1,024 kilometres, and that's a very densely filled map, with a one centimetre resolution. The reason we chose 1,000 kilometres is that it takes long enough to fly at Mach 2 or 3. We are simulating real time, so there's no button you press to fly faster than you should. To fly from one part of the world to another is going to take you a pretty long time even with a 1,000 kilometre map. And we have a full complement of roads, cities, rivers, and enemy and allied forces, and they're all working on the map, they're all there. It doesn't just pick it randomly as you fly up to something, it's all there whether you can see it or not." Just like in real life, eh? Yep, all the cars and trucks drive around waiting for you to choose their paths. It's a little world simulation of its own.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

How many missions are there to fly then, Jez? "That hasn't been finalised yet, we're still designing the missions. That's the last thing to go in. With the rest of the game working we can now go in and concentrate on what the user actually has to do."

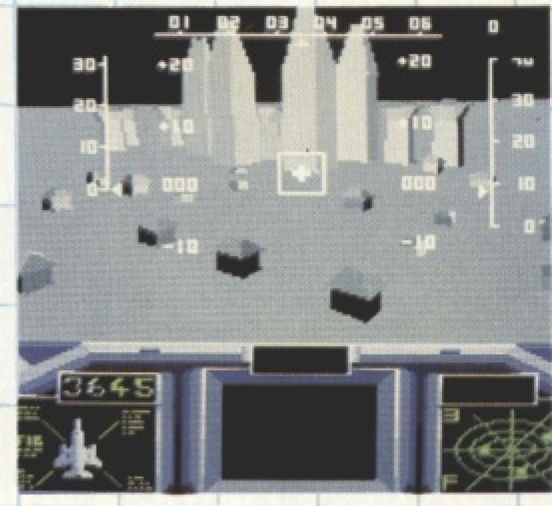
The team is picking missions that the computer can decide on, so they won't be 'hard-wired' in that sense of you know what you're going to be up against. You will always get a different game each time you sit down at the controls. That's why the mission handler seems so complex. It doesn't just pick the things for you to attack, but it has to do it logically, calculate route planning etc. So your on-board computer is checking for the best way to avoid enemy radar and stuff like that.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

The amount of hardware in **Hawk** is staggering. At the time I spoke to Jez, there were 35 different aircraft in the game: "They're all different, they look different, they look correct. Danny has spent the best part of 18 months designing the aircraft and the buildings and things. The ones that have swing wings, do. They animate. The ones that have propellers and rotors, the helicopters, they all animate correctly, they all look beautiful. And they all fly right as well."

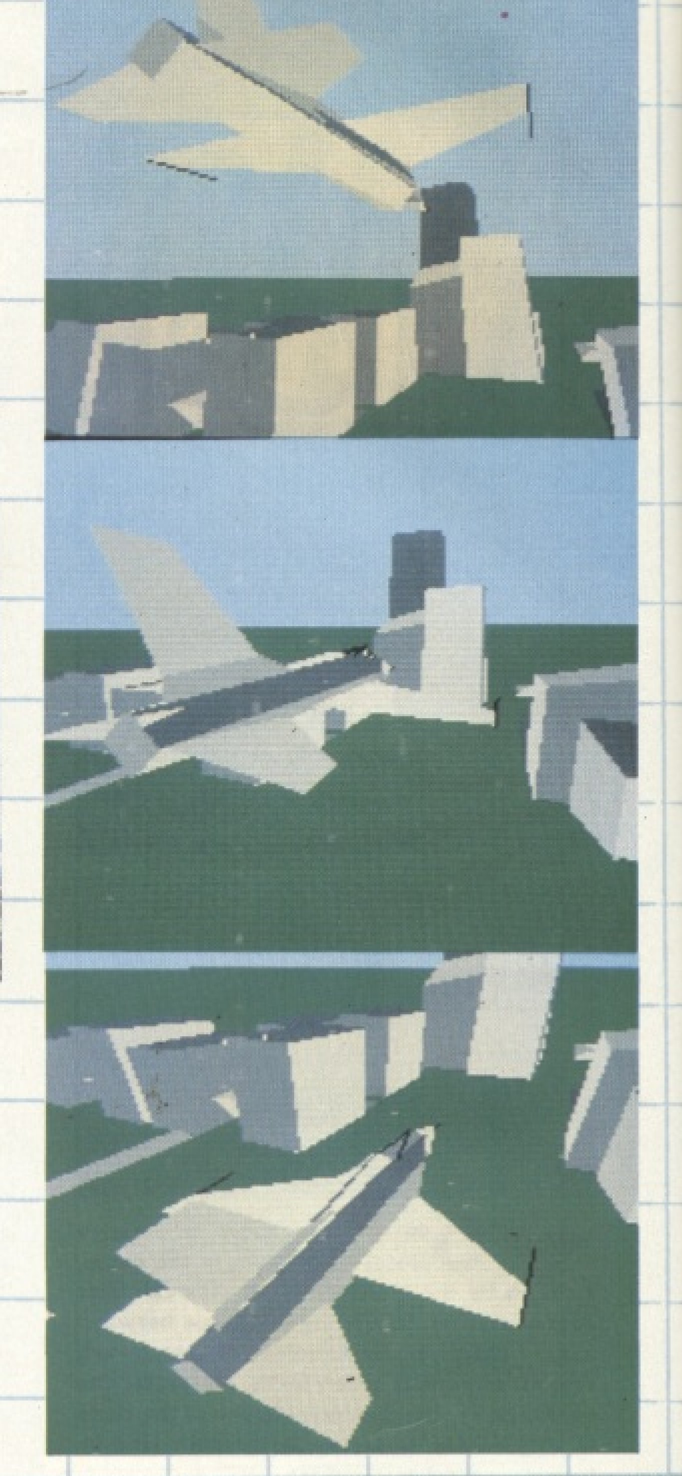
Jez reckons that the simulation algorithms in Hawk are so good that they can plug in a new plane, with

Two dimensional pictures can't really show up the terrific 3D effect in these shots, so to give you an idea here is a sequence of shots specially treated with 'stereodyne'. Stare at the centre picture and you get a realistic 3D view of Chicago. Or perhaps not.



To develop each cityscape, the buildings and roads were sculpted mathematically in the computer's memory and then put into this working simulation of the game, complete with head-up-display etc. From the cockpit you can then view the city from any angle, to check the shading. In the diagnostic routine, the ship itself is the light source, so if you view it from outside you can also check the shading.

Shown here on the game simulator, a flypast of three of the game's aircraft in 'arrowhead' formation. The pyramids in the distance are islands. Pretty pointed islands, sure, but what do you want? Palm trees?



new throttle response and wingspan and wing shape and it will fly correctly for that type of aircraft. The code driving their planes paths is small, just telling them where to go in the space provided. The algorithms for the flight simulation take over and make the particular object react like the real thing. "You can fly anything from an F-16 combat fighter to 747 Jumbo Jet or even Concorde, A-10 Tankbuster... they're all in there and they all fly the way they should, even the SR-71 Black Bird! Yes, that's in there too." Ah yes, the famous secret black spy plane that's more like a space ship (interesting fact: did you know the SR-71 is about to be retired after 25 years service? Not many people know that... Ed).

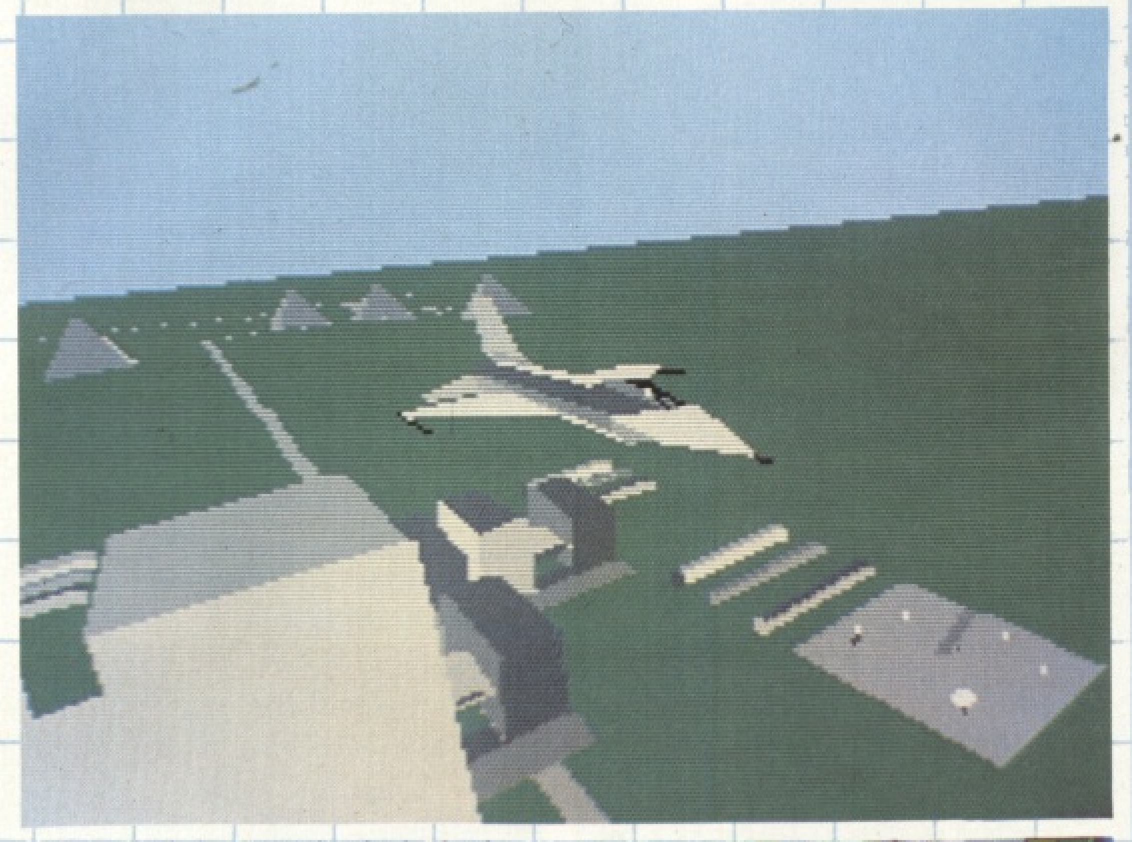
OBJECTS OF DESIRE

Apart from the other aircraft, there are 250-300 other objects in the game, all demanding space. These include hot air balloons and zepellins drifting around in the atmosphere. There are also a lot of buildings, like hangers and domes with swing doors and sliding hatches, holding all kinds of naughty surprises. The technology to produce so many objects has taken a lot of work. "For example, **Starglider** had about 25 objects which was considered a lot, at the time. Things like **Carrier Command** or **Virus,** they only had about 20-30 objects. **Starglider 2** had 103." The team shoehorns all the objects into memory by constantly refining the format the objects are stored in. Now they take up a mere 0.5K per complex object. Even with a few hundred objects in memory you only lose about 150K, and probably less than that, as not every object is as complex as a helicopter made from 70 polygons! Jez is proud of his boys' ability to keep a number of multiple polygon shapes moving on the screen at normal speed: "What amounts to hundreds of polygons all whizzing round in each scene you see on screen, which is why it's amazing how fast it is from how how much work it's doing."

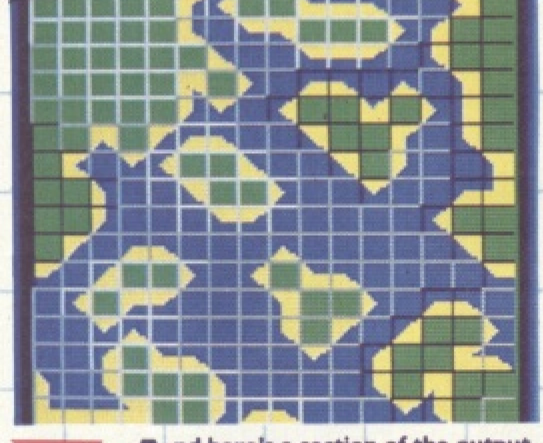
Hawk is fast, because the Argonauts like fast-moving games, and to simulate reality you need a fast frame rate. But there has to be a trade-off in speed to calculate all the objects, light sources and shading: "We're not in it to say this is the fastest game ever. We're in it to say this is the best looking, best playing game ever. And it's still fast (laugh). We could get it faster if we skimped on the detail, but we're not going to!" One thing for Amigaphiles to note is that Jez told me that if you run a fast 68020 or 68030 processor in your machine, your game will not only run faster but have beautiful extra shading and rendering routines running in parallel with the normal output from the game. So it will run faster like normal games will, but it will also look better too!

So, the amount of things you can keep track of is dependant on the sophistication of the algorithms you use. What is the upper limit? "We don't think they're going to get any faster graphics using what we're using now. It's a case of finding more varied ways of displaying them. We've got some transparency in there now, so we can have window panes and things like that. We may look into curves in the near future. Not for **Hawk,** probably for the next project."

The prpblem as Argonaut see it is you can go so far developing new algorithms and new ways of making graphic cames, but if you don't produce products, you



Fly low over the city in the demo city database, Argonauts can examine the scene in great detail, and this time without shading, but with colour. The planes can be examined all round for accuracy of design and colour.



Paul Reid's map designer works in any resolution from 1,000 km to 1 cm. You can place any object from a building to a city or road with pixel perfect accuracy, even have a fly-over (why not?).



And here's a section of the output from the designer. All the blue lines are rivers, the white ones are roads, and all the little cyan smudges are cities and airports to explore.

don't make the money to pay for the wages of your programmers, the rent, or the petrol for your Ferrari. You have to make a game every once in a while, but this allows you the scope to play around with new techniques, new ideas.

GOOD DESIGN GUIDE

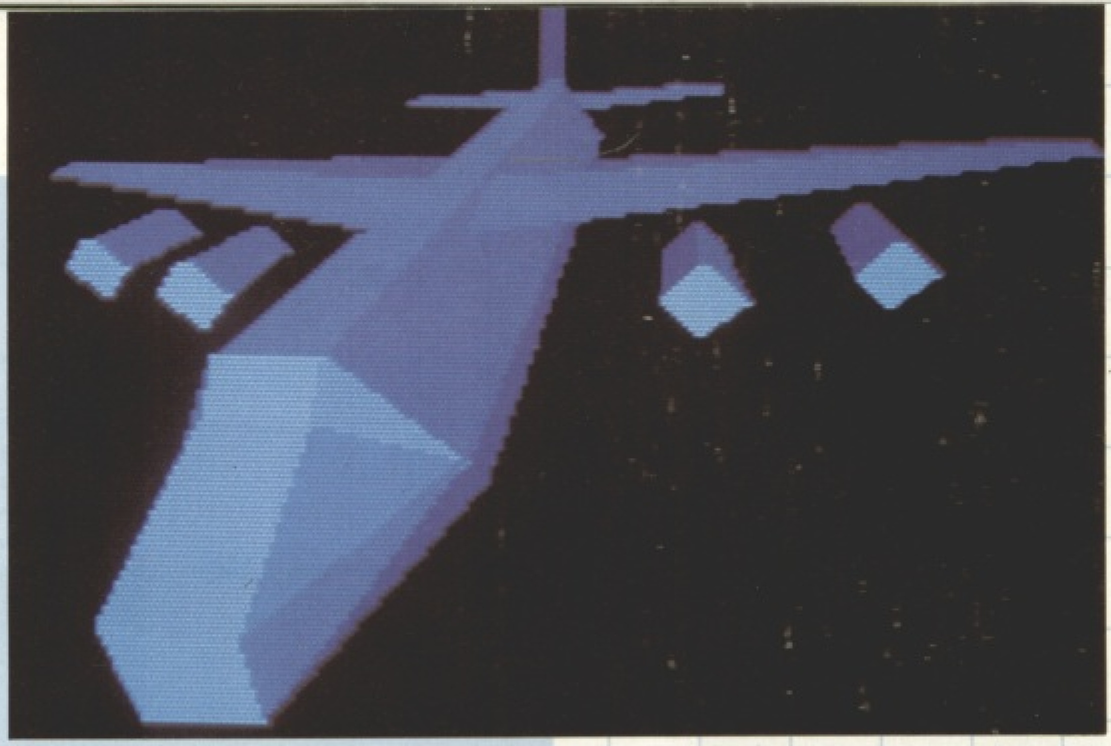
Originally, **Hawk** was designed by Jez to get the Electronic Arts contract, but since then so many people have been involved in it that it looks nothing like his original design. Better too, he says: "Because one person can't do a global design. And this game has had a lot of minds on it, honing it and making it really special." It's the Argonaut design philosophy in a nutshell, a group effort by Jez's hand-picked troops.

What is the Argonaut approach to a design? "We like to design around the machine that it's going to go on. Original designs are always too ambitious, and as we find out what the machine's capable of and push its limits, we then tailor the game design around the machine. So we end up with a well fitting product. We are unusual in that we are one of the few companies which is prepared to go a long time without producing anything to get them really good. We're a year late so far with **Hawk.** EA has been very patient. Unlike some companies we've worked with in the past, (no names please) who'd rather it in on the day it should be, than better the day later, sort of thing."

Jez also likes the EA philosophy of game design, which in typical Californian style is short and snappy, like an advertising slogan – Simple, Hot and Deep. Simple means that the player has to be able to get into it relatively quickly. Hot means it has to be an incredibly good game, pushing technology to the limits and looking fab. And Deep means it has to last. You must want to play it again and again. "Otherwise it's not good value, which is what I like to give people," adds Jez, "after the initial excitement you must want to back to it weeks or even months later." And haven't we? **Populous** and **Fusion** are two examples which spring grinningly to mind.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

Usually in the Work In Progress features, we like to give a glimpse in to the special techniques which the programmers use to produce these startling on-screen effects. But unfortunately for us, Argonaut's are all proprietory. "They're what give us the edge, so we have to be very coy about telling people about them." But what Jez could tell us was that the techniques they use are not what you'd find in any textbook. Most 3D companies, he says, just lift their algorithms out of texts on 3D vectors and How To Do Computer Graphic tomes. You can get reasonable graphics that way, but not fast graphics. Theirs is very much a mathematical approach to programming than an artistic cut and paste exercise using different sized sprites, ready built graphics etc. "We don't like to force the eye to look in any one angle or in any one perspective all the time. We like to be able to pan the camera/eye around a bit. We really like the generality of our graphics system, because now we can plug in a new object very easily when it gets designed. We can now light it from any angle, so the light source can be anywhere, even moving. And you can move the camera anywhere, even instantly punch up a new camera and get a new view in real time."



SELF ASSEMBLY

The Argonaut development system that the team has been writing in parallel with the **Hawk** project is its own assembler package. Puns are a way of life at Argonaut. The very name of the company is a pun on Jason and the Argonauts, a classical civilisation yarn about a hero and his boatful of adventurers striding out in search of the golden fleece. All puns about fleecing and gold aside, Jez plumped to name the new assembler **ArgAsm,** Arg for Argonaut, and Asm for assembler. Pretty funny, huh? So, why do it in the first place.

"We've been using Hisoft's **DevPac** for a long time, and we're very happy with it, it does what we want. But **Hawk** is such a big program now, about two and half megabytes of source code, and that takes an awful long time for you to assemble the whole lot. We're talking 15-20 minutes to assemble it. And that's too long. So we set about writing our own assembler that would double **DevPac's** speed. We did a lot of experiments with parsers etc. In the end we settled on a novel new system which is not two or three times, but 10 times faster. Some things which were taking minutes are taking seconds. And now it's finished."

There's now even an editor for it, not originally planned, called ArgEdit. It's a multi-window multi-file editor, so now they can edit all the source files at the same time on their cluster of pumping iron Amiga A2000s. So out of their need for a faster development system came a actual product which we can all use. Well, all of us who eat and drink source code that is. **ArgAsm** should be out in late July, so keep watching the skies.

To fully test the shapes of objects in the game, the objects are put into this special viewer which checks the shading and integrity of the object. Does it shade itself properly in relation to the light-source? Does it look hot? You betcha.



The Hawk team caught in a typically laid-back pose. From left to right: Chris Humphries (Flight dynamics and object strategies), Paul Reid (Maps), Ian Crowther, (icons and menu systems), Peter Warnes (Technical stuff like maths and polygons), Richard Clucas (project management and general bossing about) and of course, Jez San (well...erm...everything else, really). Truly a buch of guys Argo-naut to be messed with.



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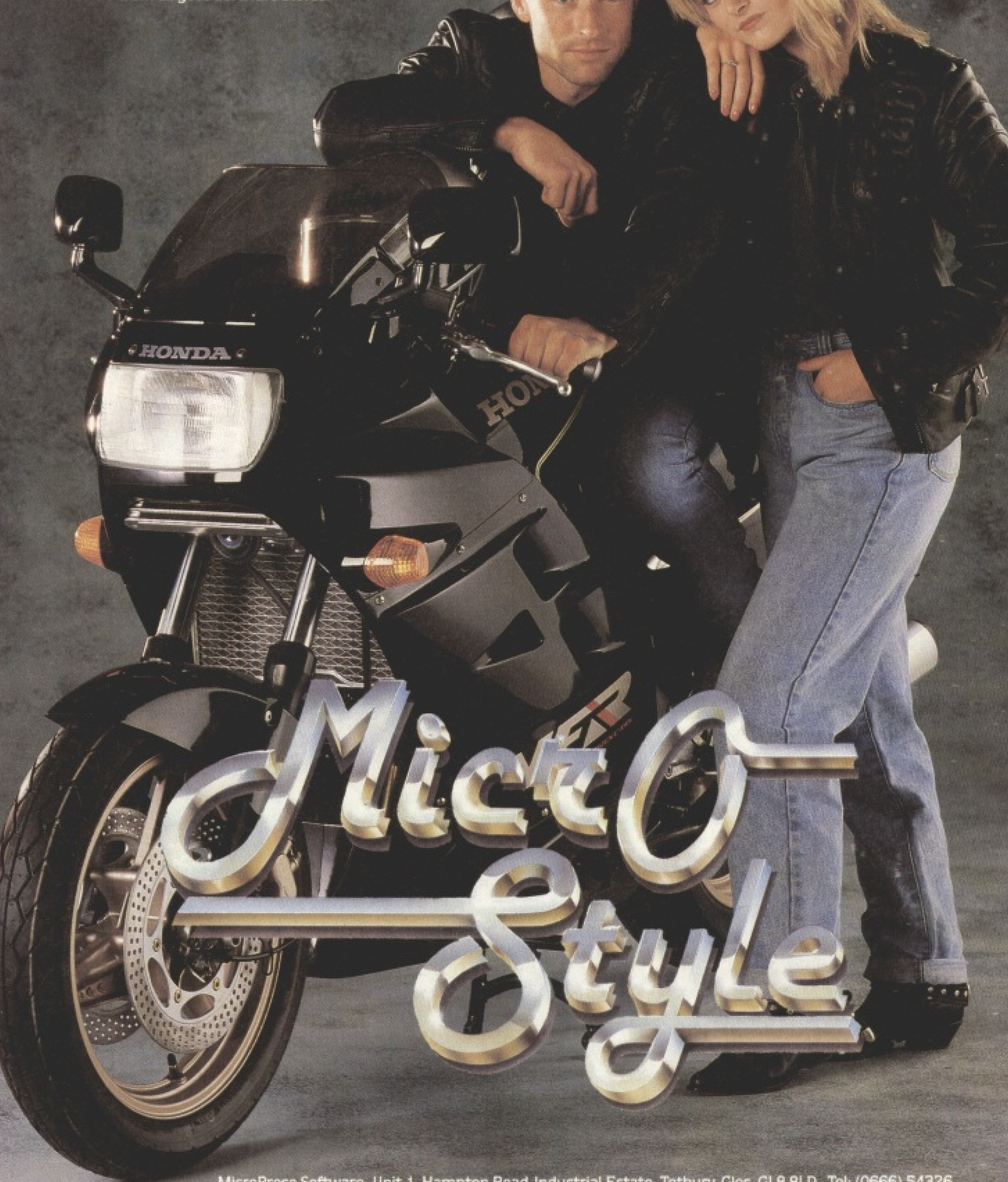
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007 Licence To

James Bond may have lost his licence, but Domark still has one – and it looks as though it's been used to produce the best 007 game yet. Ciaran Brennan slips into a tuxedo and goes along for the ride...



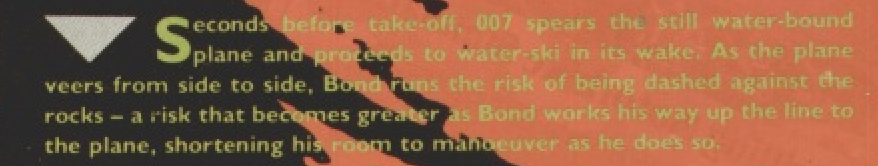
Bond's quest starts in earnest – even before the opening titles have graced the screen – when Sanchez makes an unscheduled appearance in US territory. With Bond in pursuit in an armed helicopter, Sanchez attempts to reach the safety of his hideout. Getting low enough to shoot the jeep while keeping up with it is no easy task, and the constant enemy barrage doesn't make things easier.





Oblivious to the fact that 007 is still on their trail, Sanchez's gang continues to load their evil cargo onto a floating plane. As Bond swims towards the slowly accelerating plane (destroying any heroin that he encounters), he's set upon by harpoon-weilding enemy scuba divers, hovercraft and even sharks! James is armed only with a knife, but when he kills an enemy diver he picks up a harpoon gun, bringing the second half of this scene into play...

Seconds before take-off, 007 spears the still water-bound plane and proceeds to water-ski in its wake. As the plane veers from side to side, Bond runs the risk of being dashed against the rocks – a risk that becomes greater as Bond works his way up the line to the plane, shortening his room to manoeuver as he does so.





nce
oKill

The seventies was without a doubt the decade that style forgot... clothes and hairstyles took a turn for the worse – and even the bi-annual Bond movie became a ridiculous pastiche, with Roger Moore's 'light comedy' replacing Sean Connery's more masculine style.

Fortunately, Moore finally put away his truss and handed over his licence to kill to the younger, more athletic (and infinitely more swoonsome) Timothy Dalton.

However, much to the dismay of Bond lovers everywhere, Dalton's first effort, **The Living Daylights**, was the wettest Bond effort yet, with the new 007 displaying a far more 'right-on' attitude than ever seemed possible while Connery or Moore had the role.

But now it looks like things are looking up, as Dalton's second attempt, **Licence To Kill**, has a sharper cutting edge than any previous Bond movie (it's the first ever to receive a '15' rating), with the smooth agent tracking down an evil South American drug dealer, Sanchez, instead of the usual over-the-top super-criminal.

In the computer game stakes, Bond's doldrums were accurately reflected by a series of so-so games which didn't accurately reflect the super-spy's exploits – or even stand up as games in their own right. This time around though, Domark promises that Bond's cinematic renaissance is reflected in the latest game's multi-level all-action format.

Although the gameplay is sectioned off to roughly follow the film's plot, the sections are linked by a short 'movie' sequence to combine the disparate parts into a smooth-flowing, complete story.

▲ Sanchez once again manages to slip through the net and makes his getaway in a turbo-prop plane – with Bond in hot pursuit. With only two minutes to go before Sanchez reaches the safety of Cuban airspace, James lowers himself from the speeding helicopter by a safety line, and attempts to attach the line to the plane's tail-fin – a sort of aerobatic fishing. The fluctuating speeds of the two aircraft coupled with the realistic inertia effect makes this section a bit like trying to pick up a live frog with greasy hands.

▼ As the South American criminal nears his waiting aircraft, 007 gives chase on foot armed only with his automatic pistol and a bullet-proof vest which protects him from only four direct hits – a fifth finishes him off. 'Q' has equipped James with an aiming reticle to make things a little easier – but the enemies' attack patterns are random, so a little brainwork is just as important as random blasting.



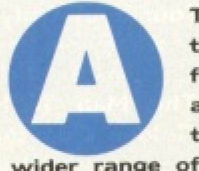


▲ The tale nears its climax and Bond once again finds himself airborne – this time in pursuit of a fleet of heroin-filled tankers. Bond's first task is to swing down from the plane and take control of the first truck. From then on it's a road duel as Bond takes on the remaining trucks. Sanchez drives the final truck – and he's armed with deadly Stinger missiles!

ST Domark's previous attempts at bringing Bond to the small screen have more often than not ended in disaster – who remembers the lacklustre 8-bit interpretations of **A View To A Kill** and **The Living Daylights? Licence To Kill** succeeds where the others failed for two reasons – because it's a very enjoyable game and (just as importantly) a faithful adaptation of the film. The movie's most spectacular action sequences have been realistically recreated and the levels genuinely flow into one another, thus adding more to the cinematic feel. Each section is different enough from the last to maintain variety, and at times the action can get a little too hot to handle – but that's nothing that practice won't cure. At last, a Bond game that will be appreciated by 007 fans and arcade addicts alike. 'Q' would be chuffed.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	77%
PLAYABILITY	83%
VALUE	80%

OVERALL 82%



This will be identical to the ST version, apart from some minor inevitable colour changes and the possibility of a wider range of sampled sounds. It's due to appear soon at a price of £19.99.



Both EGA and CGA are supported, with the EGA version shaping up to be every bit as impressive as its counterparts. It should be released sometime within the next month at £24.99.

FILM SPIES ARE FOREVER

Double-oh-seven... James Bond's licence to kill or Cubby Broccoli's licence to print money? Curtis Hutchinson casts a quick glance at the history of the world's most famous spy and remains shaken...



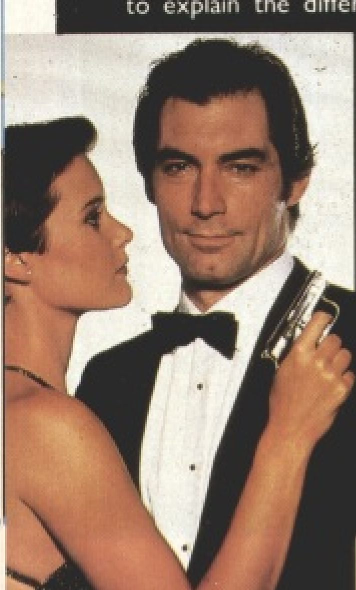
The Bond machine rolls confidently into the 1990s with **Licence to Kill**, a film that effectively continues the redefinition process kicked off by 1987's **The Living Daylights**. Rather than focusing on yet another evil genius hell-bent on global domination, this latest film tackles a 'real' issue... organised drug dealing in South America.

Timothy Dalton's 007 may not be a mere clone of his predecessors, but he's as hard-edged and human as the Bond of the original books. Although the movie has all the elements synonymous with a Bond film, like the elaborate chase sequences, the inevitable gadgets and obligatory bimbos, it's executed with the kind of subtlety that's been absent from the series since Sean Connery said (never say) never again and hung up his toupé.

Spanning, as it does, 27 years and 16 films (18 if you count the 'unofficial' **Casino Royale**, featuring David Niven as Sir James Bond and Woody Allen as Jimmy Bond, and of course **Never Say Never Again**) it was inevitable that the quality of the first three movies could not possibly be sustained, but who could have predicted the lull that set in after Connery retired?

In fairness to Roger Moore he did start out promisingly enough with **Live and Let Die**, but successive films moved progressively away from the central character to focus on gadgetry and stunts. Consequently the films lost their individual identities.

For example your casual Bond watcher wouldn't have many problems remembering the plots to the Connery movies, but I defy anyone to explain the difference between **The Spy Who Loved Me** and **For Your Eyes Only**. Whilst we're on the subject, what the hell was **The Man With The Golden Gun** about? I seem to recall that Christopher Lee had three nipples, Britt Ekland screamed a lot and I missed the last bus home after seeing it...



With Moore finally bowing out after the lamentable **A View to a Kill**, the series' long-time producer Albert Broccoli ('Cubby' to his friends – and enemies) wisely encouraged his new Bond, Timothy Dalton, and production team to look back at the earlier 007 adventures as a reference point. The results speak for themselves.

Even though the new film borrows some of its plot from the novel **Live and Let Die** (along with two short stories; **For Your Eyes Only** and **The Hilderbrand Rarity**), **Licence to Kill** is the first Bond film not to feature an Ian Fleming title.

Originally it was to be called **Licence Revoked**, but this title didn't translate well into other languages (and rumour has it that, when tested, the majority of a selected American audience didn't know what 'revoked' meant). Furthermore the resident tunesmith was probably having a few sleepless nights trying to come up with a catchy three minute theme song with **Licence Revoked** in the chorus.

Curiously though the original title is far more appropriate than the one that was finally chosen. For the first time in the series Bond lets his emotions get the better of him and he embarks upon a personal vendetta to avenge his American ex-CIA friend Felix Leiter (played by David Hedison, last seen in the role in **Live and Let Die** and a veteran of the classic TV series **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**) thus provoking M to suspend his licence to kill.

Shot entirely on location in Mexico and Florida, **Licence to Kill** is only the second 007 movie not to be based at Pinewood Studios, the first being **Moonraker** which was filmed at three separate studios in Paris.

Bond, however, wouldn't be Bond without a sprinkling of useful gizmos.

Even though he's been struck off Her Majesty's Secret Service, 007 is paid a visit from a vacationing Q (Desmond Llewelyn, who's appeared in every Bond movie except **Dr No** and **Live and Let Die**). He brings with him a bag of goodies containing apparently innocuous but lethal tourist accessories like a passport that explodes when opened, a tube of toothpaste stuffed full of plastic explosives and a Hasselblad camera that turns into a gun.

As for what happens next? Well, that would be giving it away... One thing that can be revealed though, is that, despite reports to the contrary, **Licence to Kill** will not be Dalton's last Bond film, his next, as yet untitled, adventure is scheduled for a summer 1991 release.

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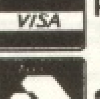
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Total Eclipse

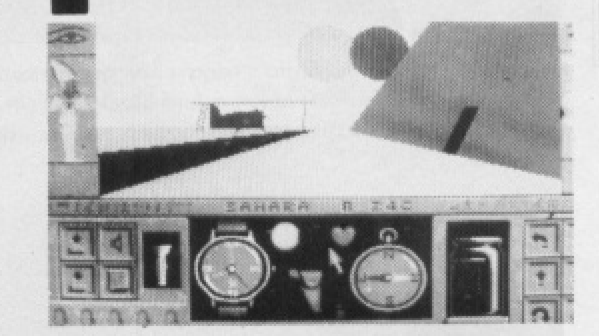
It's not too clear what this creature is – perhaps a mummy. Anyway, it occasionally zaps you. Remember, the shrine which contains the curse mechanism is situated at the top of the pyramid. Always try to move upwards. Shooting various blocks will often reveal an invisible staircase to seemingly inaccessible doors. To get to ramps which also cross the rooms it is often necessary to move to another location and double back. Mapping is vital. It's easy to become lost in the labyrithine set of chambers.

If Driller and Dark Side were the warm-up acts, Incentive's latest offering for Micro-Status could be the star turn. Paul Boughton looks to the skies to see the sun and moon in alignment.

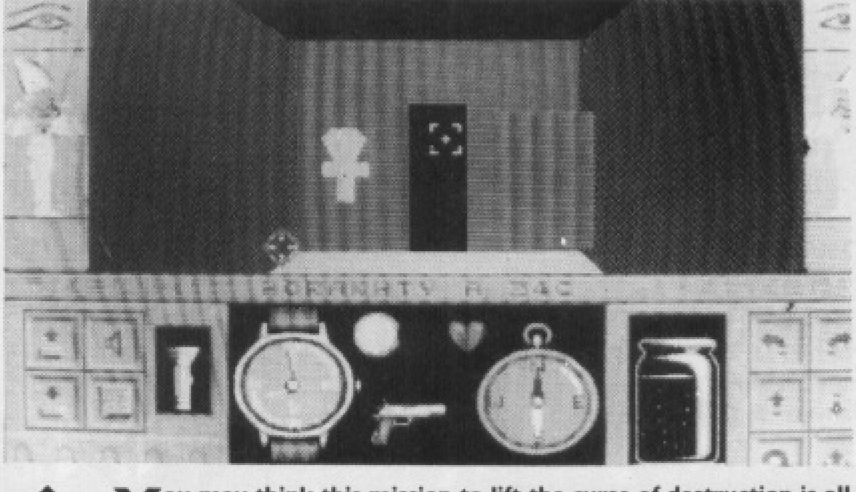
Freescape, Incentive's three-dimensional gameplay system, is a great technical innovation which creates a truly believable environment, realistic movement and perspecitve and a good, solid feel. However, the first two games to utilise the sytem: **Driller** – about outer space oil rigs – and **Dark Side**, a sort of sequel, were clever but lacked a sense of pace or excitement.

But now we have game number three, **Total Eclipse**, which, from the very start, is an attention grabber. It has atmosphere and a sense of the mysterious, instantly invoked by the game's setting – an Egyptian pyramid in the 1920's.

The proceedings start with you standing by your bi-plane outside the pyramid's entrance. A quick trip around the structure shows you that the sun is about to be eclipsed by the moon, which, as Egyptian legend has it, will bring about an ancient curse which spells doom and destruction for the entire world. The disaster spell will be enacted in about two hours unless you can lift the curse... and that means entering and exploring the pyramid.

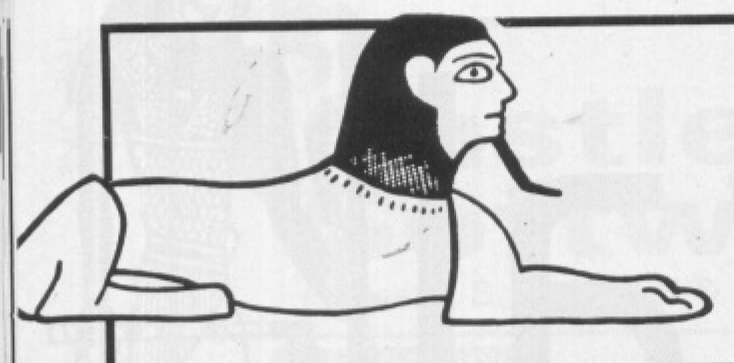


Desert Song. The first step is to turn off the awful music – the sound effects add much more to the atmosphere. Check out your equipment, it includes a Gun, Torch, Watch and Compass, with everything controlled easily by the mouse. Okay, get out of the sun and into the tomb.

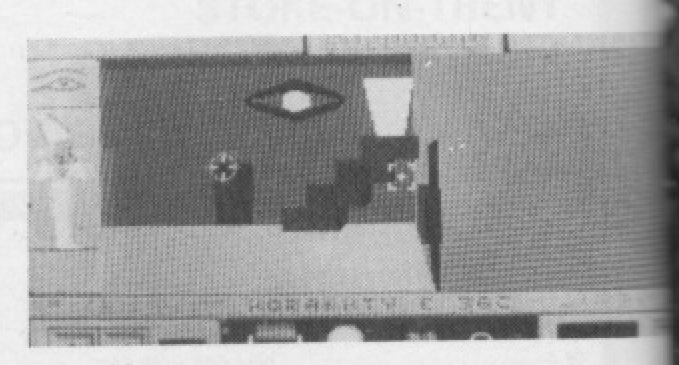


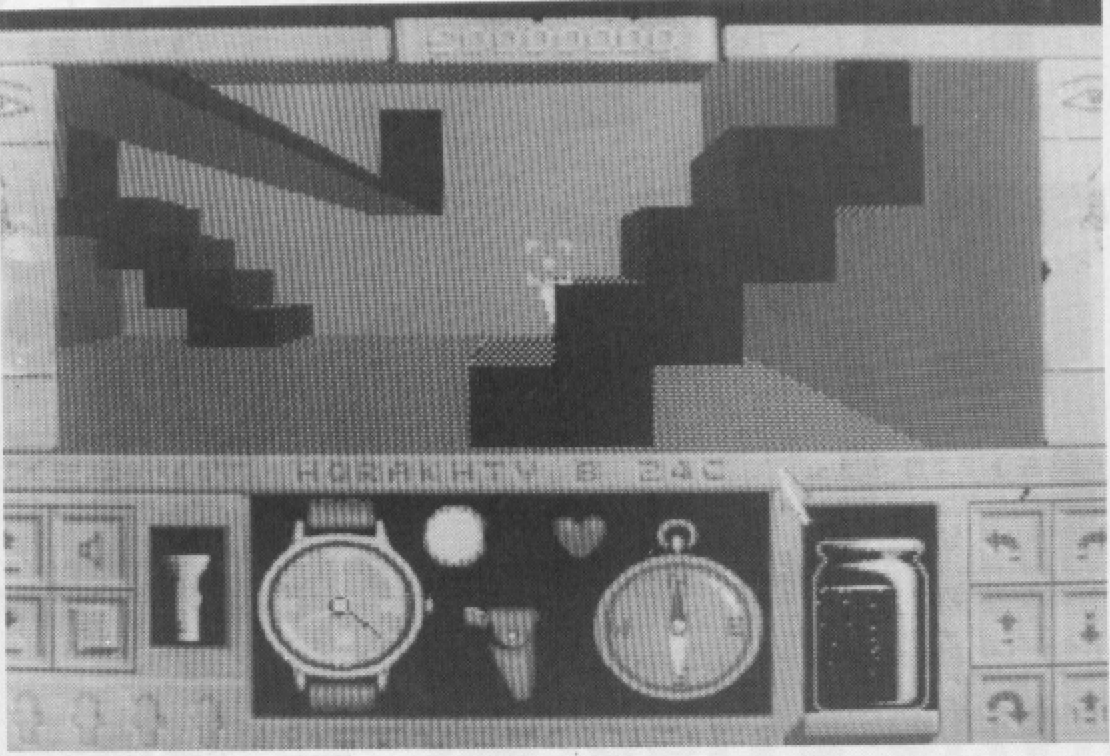
You may think this mission to lift the curse of destruction is all that's important. Not at all, you're also encouraged to indulge in a spot of tomb robbing. If you see something you fancy just walk straight into it. The ankas you see scattered on the walls and floors are the most obvious forms of treasure – yes, it's really a case of ankas away.



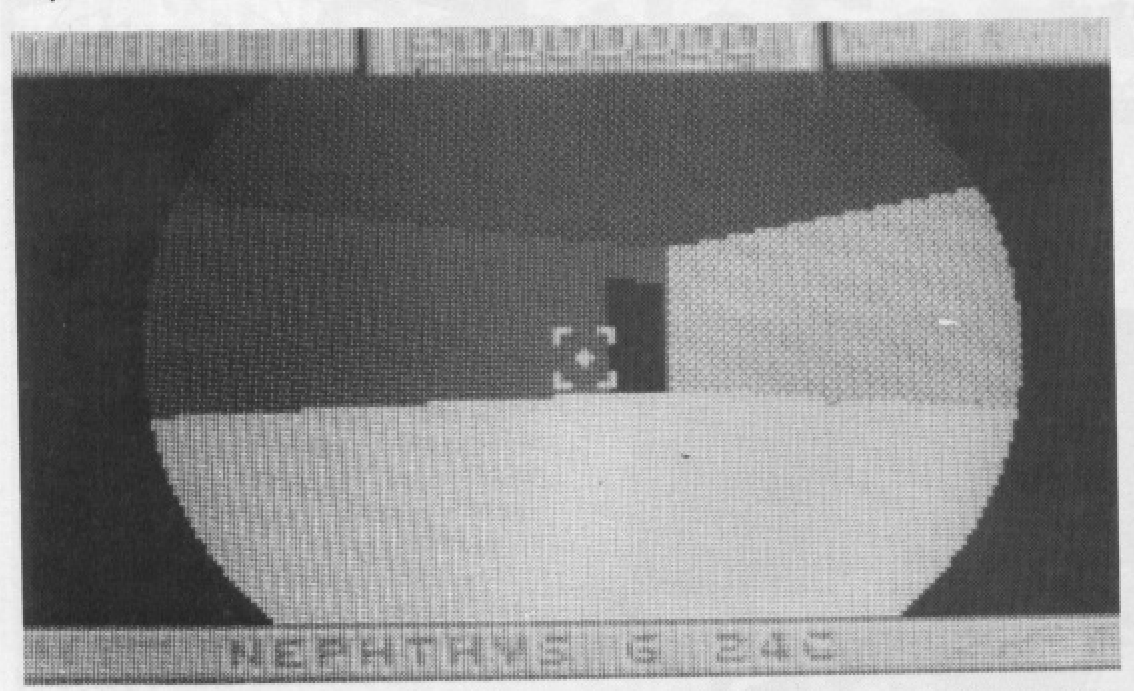


The eyes have it. But just what I'm not sure – yet. Firing at it causes it to blink.



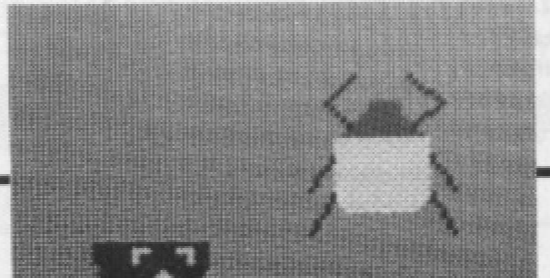


The pyramid's rooms are similar to the landscapes presented in Dark Side **and** Driller, **squares, oblongs and blocks. Again you can blast away with your gun. Hit the right spot and some of these objects which will vanish and open doors giving access to new areas to explore.**



Don't leave your torch on when you don't need it. The batteries go flat and to be left blundering around in a darkened chamber hoping to find an exit by chance is a fate the same as death.

Fail to find and deactivate the curse mechanism and the total eclipse takes place, the sun explodes and it's game over.

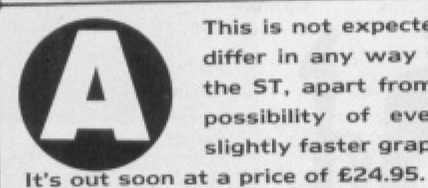


ST

The two previous Freescape games, Driller and Dark Side, were plagued by cumbersome controls – in many cases involving both mouse and joystick. Not so with Total Eclipse. Everything is operated by manipulating on-screen icons, considerably improving the game's speed. You can concentrate all your efforts on the screen rather than having to keep glancing down at your hands. The atmosphere is also a step up on previous Freescape offerings – great – but if there's one criticism, it would be this: It's all very well moving about, exploring, investigating and mapping but what about suprises? Nothing lurked in the shadows, nothing appeared to lurk in the passages, nothing leapt out to test quick reactions. That aside, Total Eclipse is an impressive step in the right direction for Freescape. Movement, graphics and a sense of excitement have been successfully united to produce a neat package. I look forward to Incentive's next offering.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	80%
VALUE	72%

OVERALL 79%



This is not expected to differ in any way from the ST, apart from the possibility of ever-so-slightly faster graphics. It's out soon at a price of £24.95.



Both CGA and EGA modes are supported, so graphically it shouldn't differ in any way from its ST and Amiga counterparts. It's also due out any day now and will be priced at £24.95.



H[illegible]t The Right Stuff? Test [illegible]ed nerves of steel, the reflexes of a cat and the mind of Einstein – Declan McColgan thinks he's got it, and Electronic Arts has given him his chance...

Chuck Yea

No pre-flight briefings here, as in Falcon, F-16 or F-19. All flight set-up is done via these drop down menus, which are accessed through the Esc key. There are also corresponding Alt commands, though why anyone should go to the bother to learn them I can't imagine. The locations menu sets you up on the runway, in the sky, coming in to land, on an obstacle course etc and not, as you might imagine, in different parts of the world. Where all this aerial action takes place is, in fact, unclear, but it looks like the Nevada desert with a lot of green paint spilled over it.



The American drawl is strong and southern: "I could never understand a pilot who could walk by an open cockpit and not want to crawl inside and go for a flight. For me, an open cockpit is an invitation to have fun. That's the feeling that Ned Lerner and I wanted to convey when we made Advanced Flight Trainer. We didn't want to bog the user down with a lot of buttons and nonsense."

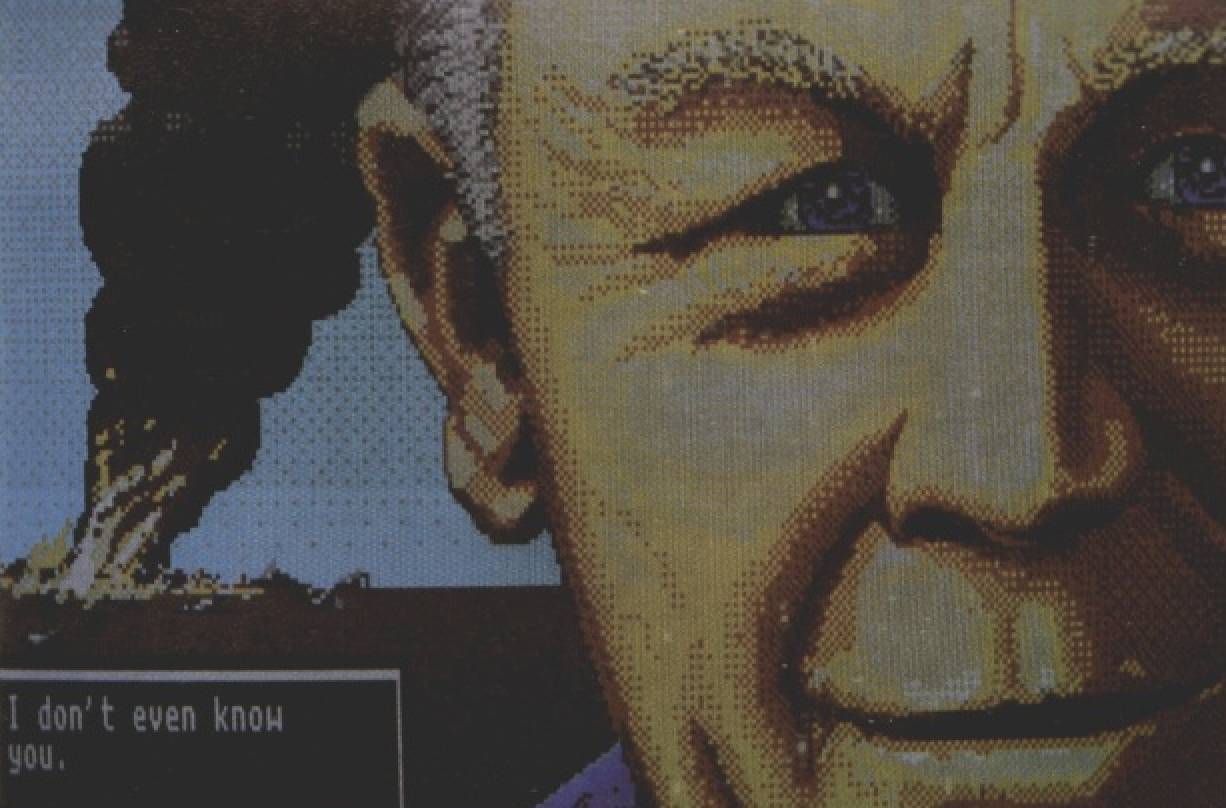
As you may have guessed, the voice belongs to Chuck Yeager, and the quote comes from the pre-recorded audio cassette supplied with Electronic Arts' latest version of the erstwhile test pilot's flight trainer program.

This cassette forms the third part of the triumvirate that takes you through



your training program – the other two being the manual and, of course, the software itself. Although the tape does contain a lot of useful tips, like so many Americans, it also has its fair share of bovine fertilizer. It's all part of the fun.





The package is full of smart remarks from Mr Yeager, especially if you do something wrong, like write off the odd Space Shuttle. Each aircraft is difficult to fly, and if you make small errors things start to go seriously wrong. For example, if you fly too fast with flaps and gears extended they get ripped off. By the way, there's no ejector seat – perhaps real test pilots fly without parachutes.



A rather garishly coloured P51 Mustang lined up on the runway ready for take-off. A nice way to take off is by viewing the aircraft from the control tower (F3), watching the plane approach and swinging around to follow.

...ager's Advanced Flight Trainer V 2.0

Training lasts for six 'days' at the end of which you theoretically emerge as a fully-fledged test pilot, able to mix it with the boys in all the top formation flying teams. During the early part, training is always executed in a dual-control Cessna, with Yeager in control. He talks you through things on the cassette while you try to follow his manoeuvres in the cockpit.

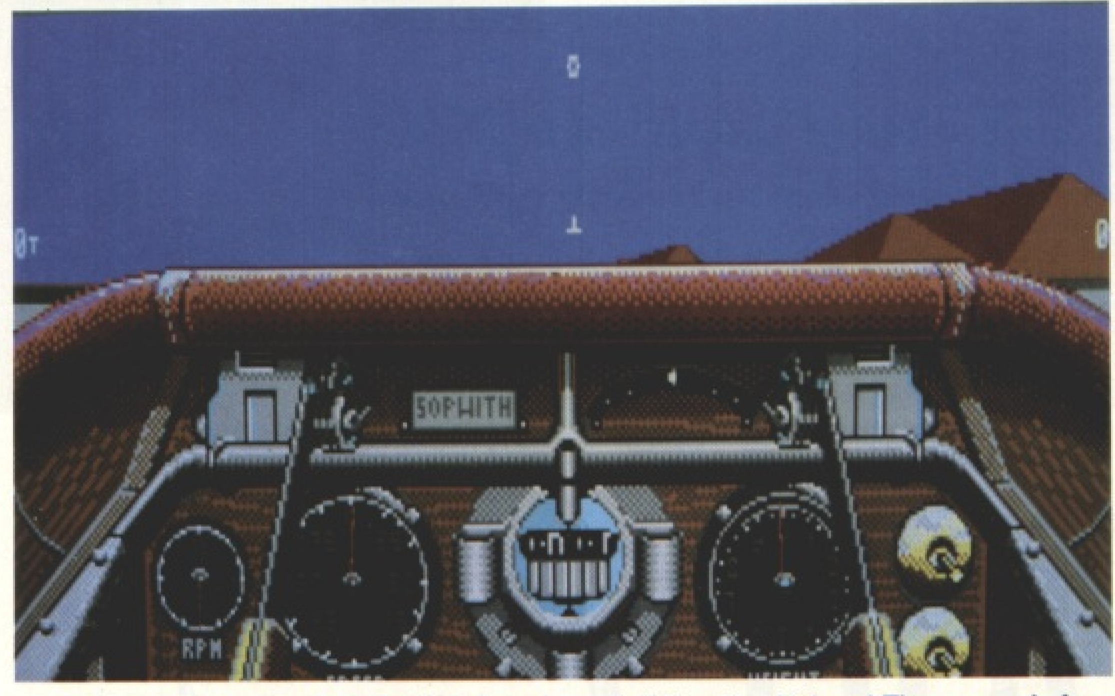
The X-29 is equipped with wings that seem to be facing the wrong way. Although it's daylight, the stars can be seen in the sky at this altitude. With the game configured for it, the constellations are also mapped out in the sky, although this can be a bit distracting when you're trying to pull out of a wing-buckling spin at Mach 3. Zooming around the aeroplane while in flight provides endless fun, but the movement is less than smooth. Even on a fast 286 the effect is quite jumpy.



A demo flight gives Chuck a chance to show off. Here he flies through a bridge at breakneck speed. Big deal. Makes me want to sneak up on him in my Stealth Fighter and give him a sidewinder in the afterburner.

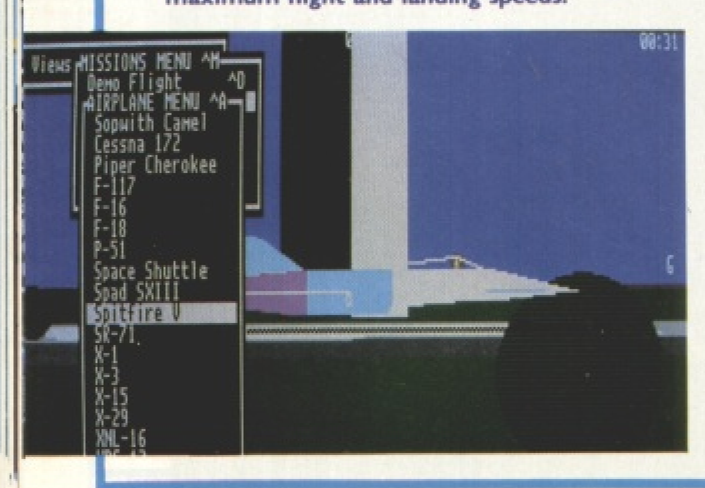


Charles Yeager first flew in the early days of World War II, during which he was shot down and worked his way back to friendly forces. He later flew to score five kills in a single day. In 1947 he flew the first aircraft beyond the speed of sound. His long career included winning almost every major flying award while attaining the Rank of Brigadier General. His total flight time adds up to more than one year. Now retired, Chuck hunts and fishes extensively and has driven the pace car at two Indy 500s.



The interior of the Sopwith Camel – and all the other biplanes! There are only four cockpit layouts in all, the others being single-engine monoplanes, WWII fighters and modern jets. One point about accuracy and realism: when was the last time you saw a Sopwith Camel with a HUD (Head Up Display)?

Before stepping into your new craft, a full technical rundown is displayed, including engine, horsepower, wingspan, length, maximum weight, ceiling and maximum flight and landing speeds.





PC

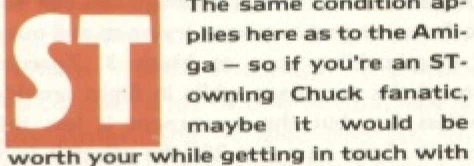
The major problem attached to CY's very own simulator is that there's very little to do with it except learn to fly. That may seem like stating the obvious, but what's the point of mastering a Spitfire or Mustang if there's nothing to go after and shoot at? True, there are races, slalom courses and formation flying sessions to add variety, but these were more difficult than challenging or entertaining. On the plus side, there are 18 different aircraft to choose from, each with accurate aerodynamic charcteristics, multiple camera angles to view from and a whole host of other gameplay options. But even the extensive range of available aircraft throws up a few problems of its own – not least of which is that there are only four cockpits to choose from: it's hard to believe that the F-18 and the Space Shuttle have similar cockpits (and when was the last time that you saw the Shuttle take off from an airstrip?). Yet another problem is that turning on maximum visual detail results in a massive slowing down – especially if you're not blessed with a 386 machine with a 40Mb hard disk, 32Kb cacheing and an NEC Multisync II screen. Playing Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer v2.0 is like having a Chinese take-away: it's enjoyable at the time, but the after effects are a little disappointing. The program constantly lets itself down by getting the small details wrong – which is inexcusable in a program which boasts heavily of its realism.

PRICE	£29.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	69%
PLAYABILITY	62%
VALUE	69%

OVERALL 72%



Commodore owners itching to get in the air with Chuck may have to wait for quite some time, as Electronic Arts is waiting to see how the PC version performs before committing itself – look to the skies.



The same condition applies here as to the Amiga – so if you're an ST-owning Chuck fanatic, maybe it would be worth your while getting in touch with EA to lodge your protest.

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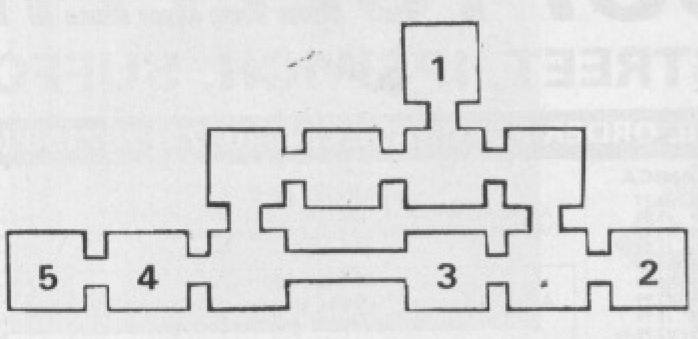
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TIPS

THIS MONTH!

- BATMAN Part II! The Joker...
- DEAD HANDY Hips for UbiSoft's ZOMBI!
- WHAT'S NECKS in NIGHT HUNTER!
- KRISTAL KLEAR solution for Addictive's extravaganza!



GOTHAM CITY PARK

GHOST TRAIN

12

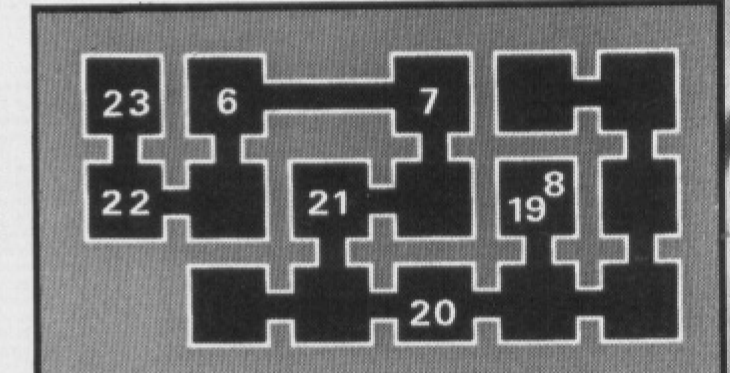
BATMAN

Ocean

As promised, the complete maps and solution to the Joker game 'A Fete Worse Than Death' courtesy of Keith Robinson and Paul Finnegan of Special FX.

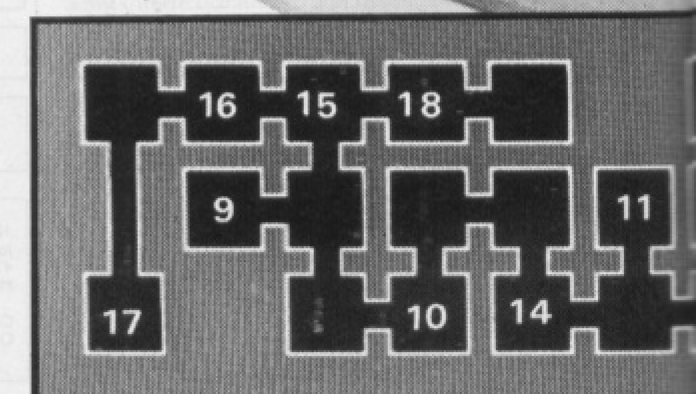
GOTO... AND...

1 Collect BAT-O-RANG.
2 Collect LIGHT BULB.
3 Collect CROWBAR.
4 Use LIGHT BULB. Go to far left. Use CROWBAR. Drop CROWBAR.
5 Collect TORCH.
6 Use TORCH. Collect GAS MASK.
7 Use GAS MASK immediately.
8 Collect TEETH. Use TEETH.
9 Collect FISH.
10 Collect MONEY.
11 Collect EARS. Use EARS. Drop EARS.
12 Collect WIRECUTTERS.
13 Defuse BOMB.
14 Defuse BOMB.
15 Defuse BOMB.
16 Defuse BOMB.
17 Collect HANDCUFFS.
18 Defuse BOMB.
19 Defuse BOMB.
20 Defuse BOMB.
21 Defuse BOMB.
22 Defuse BOMB.
23 Defuse BOMB. Drop WIRECUTTERS. Collect CARROT.
24 Drop GAS MASK. Drop TORCH.
25 Collect CAMERA. Use CAMERA. Drop CAMERA.
26 Use MONEY. Collect BULLETS. Drop MONEY.



THE SEWERS LEVEL A

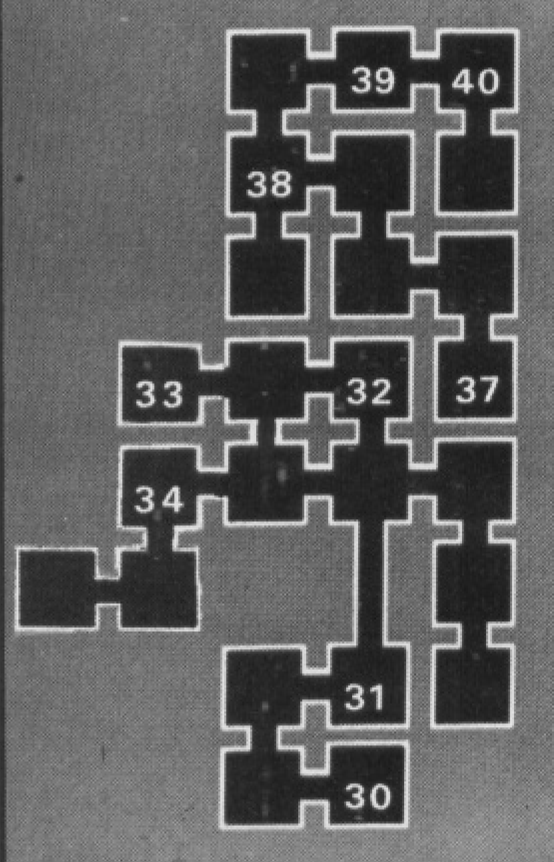
27 Collect GUN.
28 Collect COCONUT.
29 Stand over DUCKSHOOT. Use BULLETS. Use GUN. Shoot all DUCKS. Collect SUNGLASSES. Drop GUN.
30 Collect CHICKEN.
31 Fight FAKE JOKER.
32 Fight FAKE JOKER.
33 Fight FAKE JOKER.
34 Fight FAKE JOKER.
35 Collect MILK.
36 Collect HARMONICA. Use HARMONICA. Drop HARMONICA.
37 Collect KNIFE.
38 Fight REAL JOKER. When he falls, use HANDCUFFS. Collect JOKER CARD.
39 Stand over JOKER DOOR. Use JOKER CARD.
40 Collect COKE CAN.
41 Stand over ROBIN. Use KNIFE.



THE SEWERS LEVEL B

FUNHOUSE LEVEL A

FUNHOUSE LEVEL B



HALL OF MIRRORS

ROLLER COASTER

THE FUNFAIR

IN GENERAL...

- The ten bombs in the sewers are defused by standing over them and using the wire-cutters.
- As in the Penguin game, beat up the Joker's henchmen (Circus clowns) and they drop energy-restoring food, this time in the form of toffee apples.
- Eat the toffee apples as soon as you collect them. DON'T carry them through the sewers as they encourage the rats there to bite you.
- You must use the teeth to be able to eat and drink.
- The four Fake Jokers in the Hall Of Mirrors must be disposed of before the Real Joker appears in the Fun House. These Fake Jokers must be hit until they run off screen. You MUST wait until they leave the screen completely before progressing. If you don't, the Fake Joker will come back once you leave the screen.
- If you fail on the Duckshoot first time, play on the Fruit Machines and continue as before.

TIPS

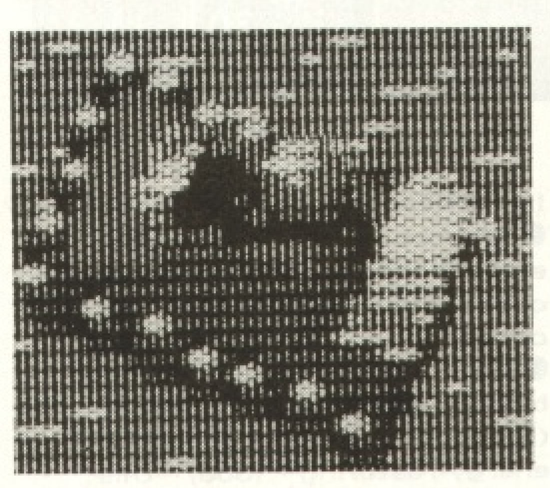
RUN THE GAUNTLET

Ocean

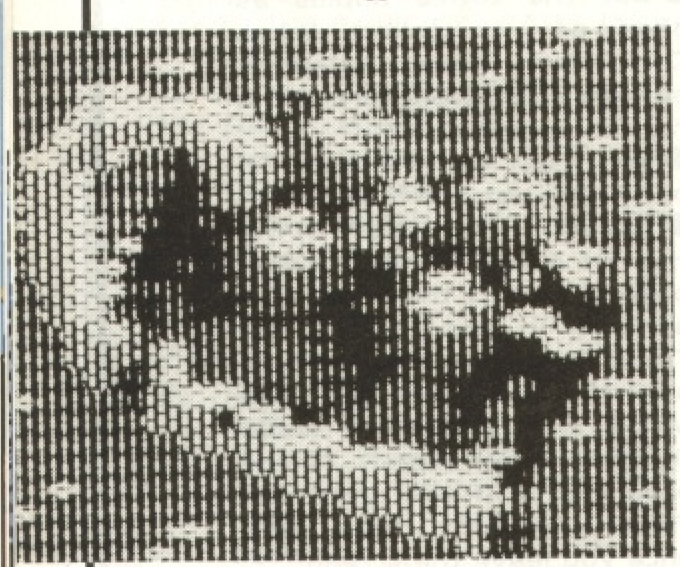
Impact Software has come to the aid of all those struggling at the hands of Martin Shaw and chums.

THE WATER RACES

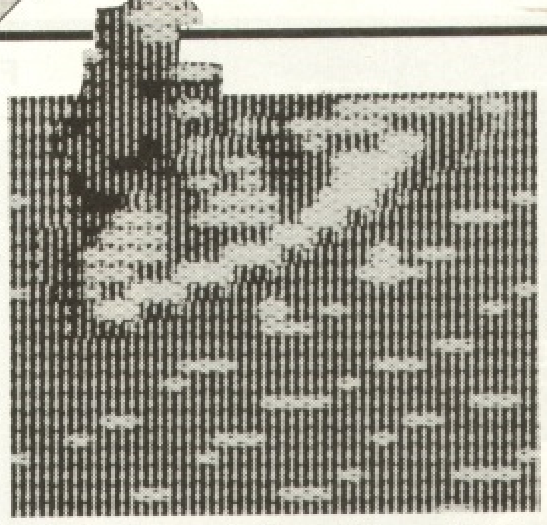
Remember that each craft differs not only in looks but also in levels of mass and inertia and so they all have their individual strengths and weaknesses.



▲**HOVERCRAFTS** are tricky to handle and have a high inertia level, so they're slow on the turn. The most sluggish craft of the lot.



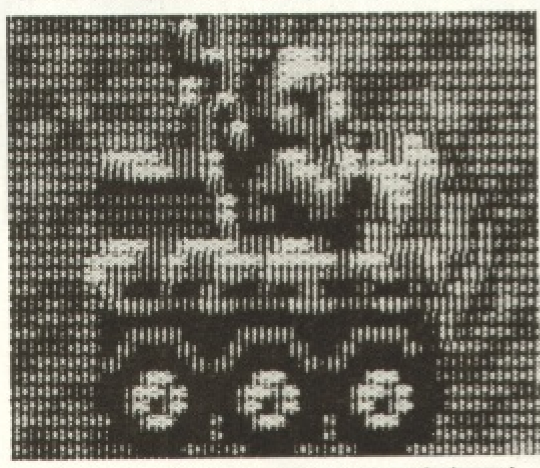
▲ **INFLATABLES** are also slow, but handle quite well and can take corners quite quickly.



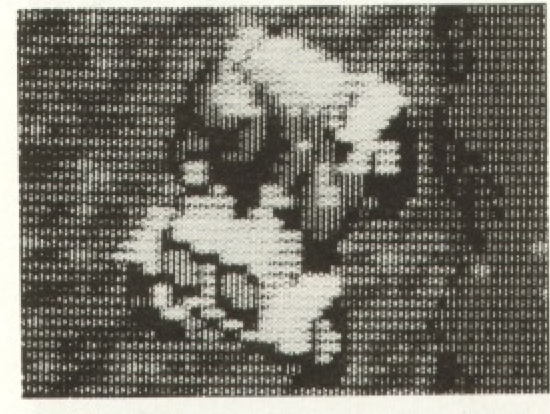
▲ **JETSKIS** are quite fast and the most maneouvrable craft of the lot, so taking corners and avoiding obstacles is a piece of cake.

The best place to overtake tne computer pacers is on the bends. The drones have no artificial intelligence and tend to go wide when cornering, making it easy for you to cut inside them.

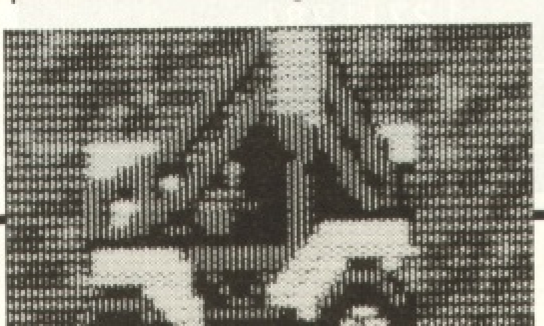
The underwater explosions are semi-randomised. There are eight fixed explosion points dotted around the course but when they explode is up to the computer. What happens is the computer picks an explosion point at random, and if that point is on screen at the time, it's detonated. In this way it's impossible to tell when an explosion will occur, but if you learn where they're positioned you can go some way to avoiding them.

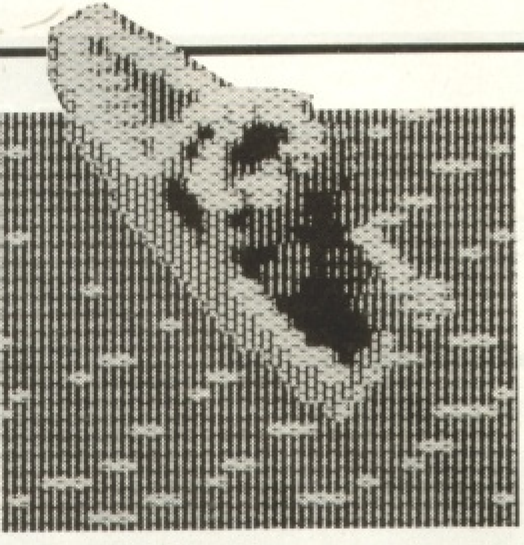


▼ **QUADS** are moderately fast, but their main strength is their manoeuvrability. Due to their four-wheel drive system, they can take corners faster and more sharply than anything else.



▼ **METEORS** are the fastest cars of the lot, but their inertia level is high, meaning they're prone to skid when taking corners.





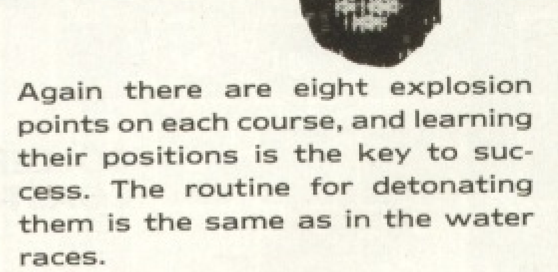
▲ **SPEEDBOATS** as the name suggests, are the fastest, and are quite maneouvrable to boot.

OFFROAD RACING

Once again, there are four vehicles, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

▶ **BUGGIES** are a sort of scaled-down version of the Meteors. They're slightly slower but handle a lot more efficiently on the bends.

◀ **SUPERCATS** are slow but highly maneouvrable, making it easier to steer around bends.



Again there are eight explosion points on each course, and learning their positions is the key to success. The routine for detonating them is the same as in the water races.

THE HILL

The assault course is all about big biceps and sturdy joysticks, but to improve your time and make the going a little easier, there is one trick you can employ: When coming up to an expanse of water, with no alternative but to wade through it, don't run straight in. Instead build up to high speed and jump just as you reach the bank. That should plunge you in about half-way across and you have much less distance to wade.



With the help of Arc Developments, Gary Whitta boldly goes where no musclebound skinhead has gone before – through all the ins and outs of US Gold's cracking coin-op conversion.

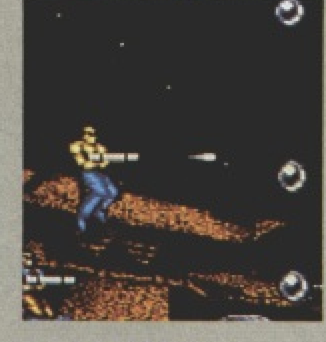


BACK TO BASICS

The most important thing for the beginner to remember is: don't try to run before you can walk. Before you can take on the might of Emperor Bios' armies, you'll need to master a few basic skills.

The control mode takes a while to get to grips with, but you should take the time out to get used to it – if you don't you'll find yourself spinning hopelessly out of control much of the time. The most common mistake is to hold down the fire button (tempting, as this gives the most rapid rate of fire) and move left or right to close in on an enemy. In effect, all that will happen is your gun will rotate through 360 degrees.

The gun rotation is something you'll have to master – many of the aliens can only be hit if you're shooting at a certain angle. The best way to rotate is to tap the joystick left or right until you reach the desired angle.





ZENNIES MAKE THE WORLDS GO AROUND

Not every alien releases a Zenny, but for the ones that do, the general rule is: the larger and nastier the alien, the larger the Zenny it leaves behind. Don't risk life and limb to collect a Zenny as soon as it appears – concentrate on clearing the rest of the screen first. Zennies normally stay around for about five or six seconds so there's plenty of time to round them up.

LEVEL ONE

Keep to the bottom left part of the screen as much as possible, the reason being that the majority of the aliens appear from the right. Most of the aliens keep in tight formation, so if you line up with the one in the 'lead' and open fire, you should be able to wipe out the entire wave without much trouble. The Running Lizards provide good target practice for this technique.

LEVEL TWO

Worms represent the main threat here. They can't be killed, so learn where they appear from so you can avoid them in time.

The armoured lizards are easier to sort out – as long as you know what you're doing. Never try to kill more than two lizards per wave. If you do, you'll be wide open to attack from the next wave.

LEVEL THREE

As in level one, don't stray too far upwards, but this time keep in the centre of the screen as much as possible so as to be ready for the ever-increasing waves of aliens that attack from behind.

LEVEL FOUR

It's hardly surprising that the final level is the toughest of the lot. Despite what you might think, you won't be accosted by wave after wave of alien onslaught – in fact the attacks are few and far between – but the ones that attack, like the monks and snakes are the hardest in the entire game.





CAST OF CHARACTERS

RUBBISH STACK

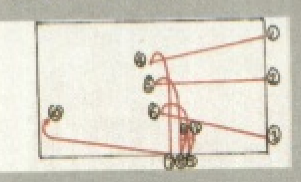
Can be knocked out piece by piece, but a far more effective method is to shoot out the brain at the bottom, which causes the whole thing to blow.

FOUND ON LEVELS: 1, 2, 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 10 for Brain, 1 for Rubbish
ZENNY: 1,000 for Brain
POINTS: 500 for Brain, 100 for Rubbish
ATTACK PATTERN: Rubbish Brain appears from the bottom, and rubbish pieces stack up on top of it. When the Brain is destroyed, the rubbish is thrown into the air and disappears.

ARMOURED LIZARDS



FOUND ON LEVELS: 1, 2, 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 3 for Lizard, 1 for Rocket
ZENNY: 100 for Lizard
POINTS: 100 for Lizard
ATTACK PATTERN: Three Lizards fly in a points 1, 2 and 3, facing left. At points 4, 5 and 6, they stop, pause and fire their rockets. They then flip back to land at 7, 8 and 9 and follow the paths of the Green Lizards at points 10, 11 and 12.



GREEN LIZARDS

FOUND ON LEVELS: 1, 2, 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 1
ZENNY: Random values
POINTS: 100
ATTACK PATTERN: Attack in trios, each one positioned slightly above the one in front.

WATER LIZARD



FOUND ON LEVELS: 2
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 1
ZENNY: Random values
POINTS: 100
ATTACK PATTERN: Appear from the bottom of the screen, hover above the water and fire before flipping back into the water.

DRAGON LIZARD

FOUND ON LEVELS: 2
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 1
ZENNY: None
POINTS: 100
ATTACK PATTERN: Appear from the Dust Dragon's mouth and fly straight off the screen, firing as they go.

PRAYING LIZARD



FOUND ON LEVELS: 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: N/A
ZENNY: None
POINTS: None
ATTACK PATTERN: Pray to the God Of War and take no part in the action.

THE PARAMECIUM

This heart-like beast is protected by a spinning circle of junk. DON'T try to get in the centre of the circle – it can't be done without taking massive energy loss. Instead take out the swirling junk from a distance then move in slightly (but stay on the left-hand side) and get just below the Paramecium's mouth orifice. If you position yourself correctly, the Paramecium won't be able to hit you, but you'll be in perfect firing position.



THE DUST DRAGON

The Dragon's pulsating heart is its weak point, and this is protected by waves of flying spears. It's almost impossible to get to the heart with a laser, so the napalm bomb is the best bet. Drop a volley of these into its chest cavity and... bingo!







THE GOD OF WAR

The God protects itself with its huge muscular arms, threatening to bash you if you get too near. The arms move in a set pattern and avoiding them is simple – when they appear, just move away to the other side, but don't open fire until his shoulders come into view. Keep hitting his shoulders to kill him, alternating between them to aovid his swinging arms.

BIOS

Bios is the most powerful of all the guardians and thus takes the most hits to destroy. His chest is his weak point, and although it's tempting to have a pop at his wings, shooting these will have no effect.



GUN TURRETS

FOUND ON LEVELS: 1, 2, 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 1
ZENNY: None
POINTS: 100
ATTACK PATTERN: Tracks and fires at you.

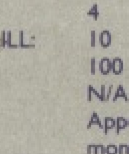
LAZER GUN

FOUND ON LEVELS: 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 1
ZENNY: None
POINTS: 100
ATTACK PATTERN: Behave like the gun turrets, but only face left and have to recharge between shots.

WORMS

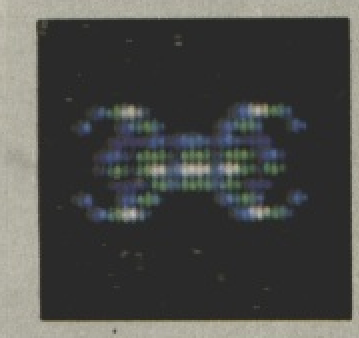
FOUND ON LEVELS: 2
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: Invincible
ZENNY: N/A
POINTS: N/A
ATTACK PATTERN: Jump up from beneath the water and try to grab you in their jaws.





MONKS

FOUND ON LEVELS: 4
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 10
ZENNY: 100
POINTS: N/A
ATTACK PATTERN: Appear in groups of three, the monks attack in horizontal formation and home in on your position.



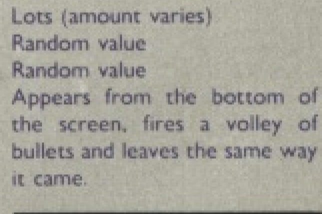
MAGGOTS

FOUND ON LEVELS: 4
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: 2
ZENNY: None
POINTS: 100
ATTACK PATTERN: These fly in circles around you, but don't fire. They move too quickly to shoot so don't waste the ammo trying.



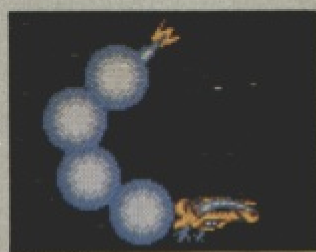
FACE

FOUND ON LEVELS: 4
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: Lots (amount varies)
ZENNY: Random value
POINTS: Random value
ATTACK PATTERN: Appears from the bottom of the screen, fires a volley of bullets and leaves the same way it came.

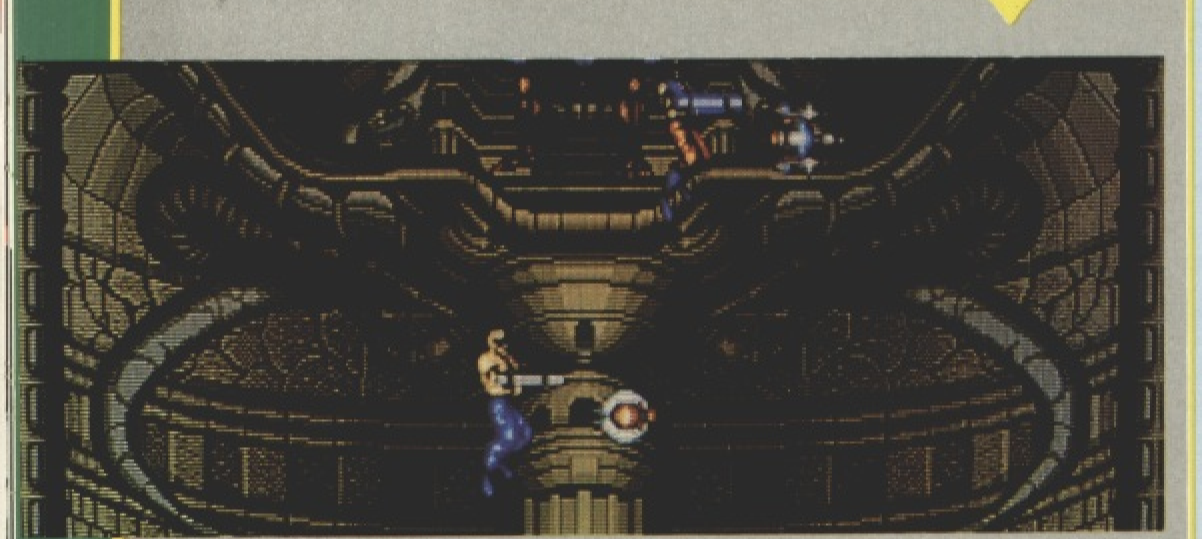


SNAKE

FOUND ON LEVELS: 4
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL: Lots (amount varies)
ZENNY: Random value
POINTS: Random value
ATTACK PATTERN: Circles the screen quite harmlessly firing occasionally. The head is the only weak spot (its body sections are invulnerable).







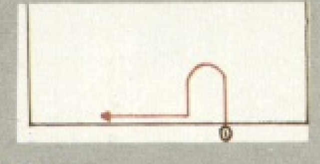
LARGE SPACESHIP



FOUND ON LEVELS:	1, 2
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL:	1
ZENNY:	500 (released at end of wave)
POINTS:	500
ATTACK PATTERN:	Attack in waves of six. Appear from the right and fly in an 'S' formation before exiting to the left.

SPIDER

FOUND ON LEVELS:	1, 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL:	10 for head, 10 for legs
ZENNY:	500 for legs
POINTS:	1,000 for legs
ATTACK PATTERN:	Jumps into screen at point 1 and walks to the left. If just the head is shot, the legs keep on walking, shooting fireballs from the 'neck' section. Destroy the legs first to kill it more quickly.



RUNNING LIZARD

FOUND ON LEVELS:	1, 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL:	1
ZENNY:	None
POINTS:	100
ATTACK PATTERN:	Run on from the right of the screen, the lizards squat and fire a shower of bullets.



POD LIZARD

FOUND ON LEVELS:	1, 2
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL:	10 for Launcher, 1 for Lizard
ZENNY:	500
POINTS:	100
ATTACK PATTERN:	Lizard pulls open the launcher to release a wave of small spinning spaceships. He then closes it and starts again.

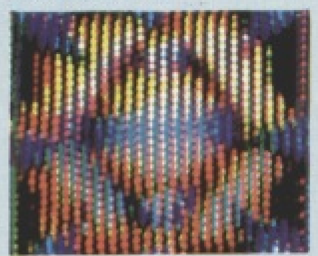
GUNPOD LIZARD

FOUND ON LEVELS:	2, 3
SHOTS NEEDED TO KILL:	10 for Gunpod, 1 for Lizard
ZENNY:	None
POINTS:	100
ATTACK PATTERN:	Gun stays dormant until you fly past, when it releases a hail of laser fire.

SHOPPING LIST

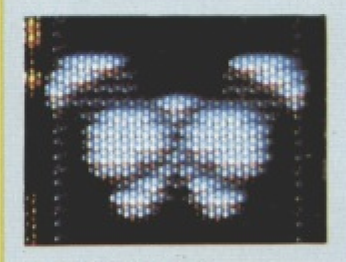
HOMING MISSILES

Go for these straight away. They increase your rate of fire, and since they lock on to their targets, there's less need to rotate your gun.



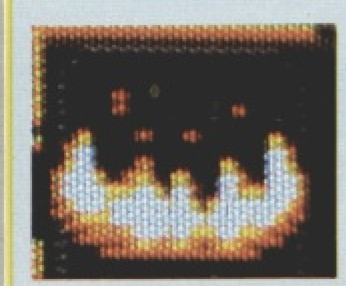
MULTI-DIRECTIONAL

A good excuse for not having to worry about rotating the gun. Eight-way firepower means what you lose in accuracy you gain in mass carnage.



ARMOUR

A must for short-term survival. With this equipped, damage caused by impact with aliens and their bullets isn't so severe so your vitality lasts much longer.



NAPALM BOMBS

Most effective against ground targets like the mechanical spiders, gun turrets and running lizards. It's also necessary when fighting the Dust Dragon. However, the rate of fire is slow and it can't be used on flying targets, so get tooled up with missiles and armour before splashing out.



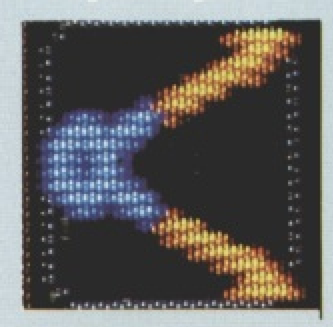


LASER

The most expensive weapon of the lot, and quite rightly so. It sears through anything on the screen in one go and isn't limited by range like the Burner. Worth saving up for.

V-CANNON

Nothing too spectacular, this simply doubles your firepower by firing diagonally as well as forward. Effective against both air and ground targets.



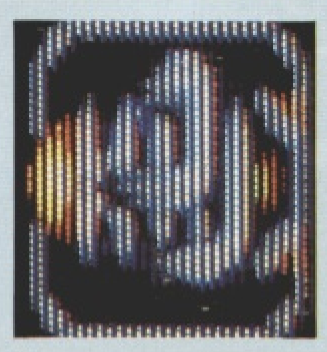
BURNER

Not the fearsome jet of fire the description 'flame-thrower' suggests, but instead a few unimpressive balls of flame. Powerful, but its range of destruction is very short. Save up for the laser instead.



BOOSTER

Makes your current weapon more efficient by boosting its power. In effect, all this means is it takes less shots than normal to kill each alien.

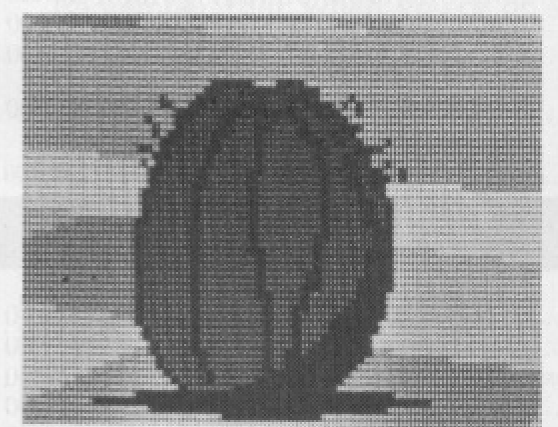


ARCHIPELAGOS

Logotron

Stop the spread of red with the second half of our beginner's guide to Logotron's 3D strategy extravaganza – once again courtesy of Astral's Ian Downend.

Keep an eye on the Necromancer at all times – he ruins your hard work by undoing your land bridges. If a Necromancer is threatening one of your bridges, quickly build a 'dummy' bar of land and lead him away into the sea – this relieves the pressure temporarily (but eventually a stranded Necromancer will teleport to another island to continue his dirty work).



▲ **A**void connections to islands with Blood Eggs on them (this isn't always possible). After a flash of lightning the nearest Blood Egg bursts, spreading its poison to the whole network of connected islands. Remember, Blood Eggs spread poison through sand connections as well as land connections.

PAC-MANIA

Grandslam

Teque's Shaun Hollingworth provided this snippet which should make it a bit easier to get that elusive extra life:

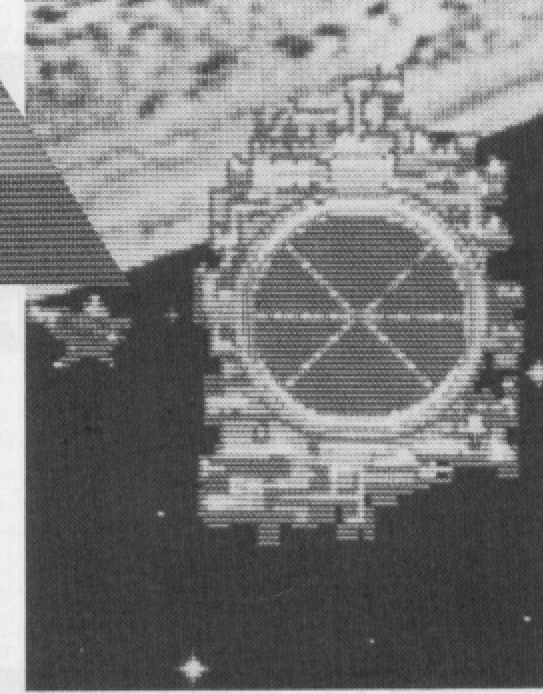
Never start play on the first level. Choose instead Level Two or Three. Doing so produces a substantial 'courage bonus' when the level is completed, which helps to award an extra life earlier on.

BLASTEROIDS

Image Works

Wot, no cheat mode? Programmer Jim Tripp forgot to include one, so to make up he's provided these handy hints...

► THE cloak is the most valuable power-up but it's hard to come by. It only appears on the medium and hard warps and then only at a late stage. So if you finish levels quickly, no cloaks turn up. Slow down, wait a while and eventually a cloak will appear.



▲ IF the warp gate to the next level appears and there are still crystals and power-ups floating about, transform to the speeder craft, which offers the best resistance to the gate's magnetic pull, to pick them up.

▼ WHEN tackling Mukor, stay in the corners of the screen as often as possible (he rarely strays out there) and take out the bottom tentacles first.

TIPS

ZOMBI

UbiSoft

Anyone who's seen George Romero's Dawn Of The Dead will already have a good idea as to how to solve many of the puzzles as the game emulates the film so closely. But for the unlucky many who've never had a chance to see it (the video version was banned several years back), here are some tips to get you started.

► TO lock up the shopping mall and thus stop any more zombies getting inside, you need to park the trucks found outside over the entrances. Get the key from the office on the second floor and take the lift to level four, where the keys to the trucks are located.

► SHOOTING the zombies is one thing – stopping them from decomposing is another matter entirely. To dispose of the lifeless corpses, lock them out of harm's way in the cold storage room found on the underground level.

► BEFORE you can explore the underground you need a source of light. To provide it, get the fuses and the gloves from level three and take them down to the underground.




Access


VISA

TIPS

KICK OFF

Anco

Kick Off's designer Dino Dini has provided some helpful hints to get you started.

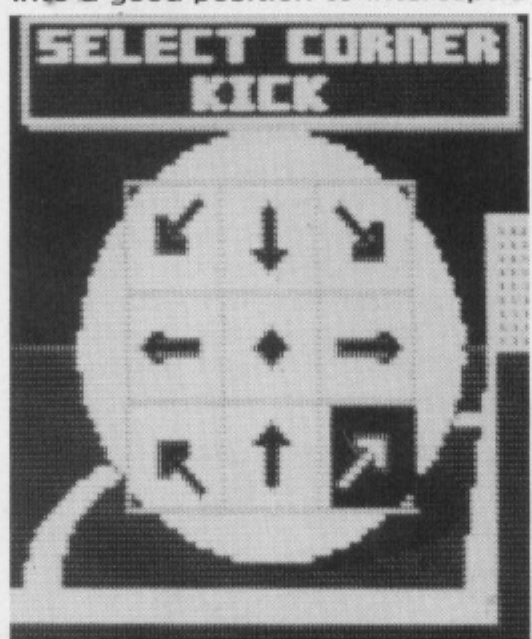
Make use of the two practice options before attempting to tackle any of the big league boys. 'Practice Skills' should be used to master passing, general ball control and (most important of all) trapping the ball. Until you learn to trap it's impossible to make much progress.

Each player is equipped with his own unique level of artificial intelligence (which fluctuates slightly between games to simulate the players being on and off form), and tnese combined individual skills and weaknesses decide the strength of the team as a whole. For example, due to a low skill factor among several of Italy's players, its offensive game is a bit on the erratic side.

Remember that when you're on the ball, the computer takes control of your team-mates and, as with all your opponents, how well they perform is dependent on their individual strengths and weaknesses. A player with low skill is unlikely to have the sense to get into a good position to intercept a pass, while one with a high aggression factor will probably execute a lot of fouls. Study the actions of your team-mates and decide which ones are equipped with the characteristics most suitable for your style of play.

Some teams are equipped with a super-player with high levels of aggression, accuracy, pace and stamina. The Brazilian Number Eight is a good example. Get him on the ball and watch him go!

The above tips only apply to the teams in the league competition. In a single game the players' stats are computed at random so it's impossible to know who the bobby dazzlers on your side are beforehand.



▲ SELECT bottom corner icon when taking a corner – more often than not the ball will drift over the goalie's head and roll across the goal-line. then all you need to do is tap it in as it passes. If you're really lucky the wind may blow it straight in!

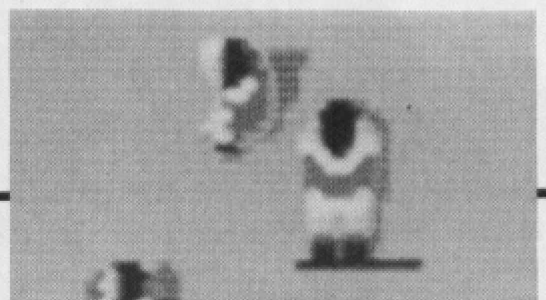
WHO'S THE *!@#ER IN THE BLACK?

There are 16 referees in total, and like the players, each has his own personality built around variables. Most of the ref's duties, like deciding which team is awarded a corner, throw-in or goal kick when the ball goes out of play are decided by the computer, who never makes mistakes. But when it comes to calling and penalising players for fouls, it's another matter entirely.

Firstly the referee must see the foul, and depending on his sight factor, he may be looking the other way at the time so a foul can be committed without it being noticed. If it is noticed, there's still a chance that play won't be stopped – depending on the ref's leniency.

If a foul is called, a free kick or penalty will definitely be awarded – this is something that's constant throughout all the refs. But penalising the player responsible again depends on a variable. If it's the player's first offence, whether or not he gets a yellow card depends on how strict the ref is.

When a red card is issued is all down to how the referee weighs up the player's performance. If he's already been given a card, he'll almost certainly be sent off on his next foul. Despite that, it's quite possible to be sent off for a first offence. Only a few of the nastier refs will do this though.



PASSING

Once the ball is trapped, the computer does most of the hard work for you. When a direction is selected, it finds the player closest to you in that direction and calculates the kick power necessary for the ball to reach him. That said, before passing the ball you must take a look at the scanner to find out where your team-mates are. The computer may be clever, but there's not much it can do to help if you boot it into a deserted area!

GOALIES

All goalies are essentially the same and differ in only one aspect. They save the same number of shots but their catch/deflect ratios differ. The more skillful the goalie, the more likely he is to catch the ball than deflect it.

NIGHT HUNTER

UbiSoft

▶ **THE best way to avoid the stake-wielding exorcists, policemen and the archers by transforming into a bat and flying over them.**

▶ **IF you enter a room that's swarming with enemies, leave and re-enter and you should find it a bit quieter. The number and type of enemies for each room is calculated at random each time you enter.**

▶ **TO protect yourself from the cross-bearing women, turn your back on them, wait for them to get close enough, then spin round and kill them.**

THE KRISTAL

Addictive

Addictive's epic space adventure with a comic twist gets the full treatment over the next two months. This issue we take you halfway through the quest...

▶ **FIND the Beggar and donate some skringles TWICE. Accept the POMMEL when he offers it as thanks.**

▶ **FIND Gloop. Ask "What do you do" and he explains everything to you. Then accept the INVITATION when he offers it.**

▶ **GO to the Palace and say to the guards "I have an invitation". Now enter the Palace.**

▶ **WALK past Nedrod and meet with the Kring. Listen to him and accept the Skringles he offers. Then meet with Nedrod. When he has finished talking and says "No more questions" keep interrogating him. He refuses to answer for a while but the fourth time you ask he gives valuable information.**



▶ **MEET with the Princess in the Palace Garden and when she asks about your mission, reply "It's a secret". Then type in "TAH" for a message from the programmers. Accept the RING OF BELZ.**

▶ **GO to the arch to the right of the green door in the town and take the SCROLL.**

▶ **GO to Sereena's stall in the market square and buy FROODLE and FRANDANAS. Eat them to boost your strength.**

▶ **FIND Boris the Butler and give to charity.**

▶ **GO through the green door, through the centre arch in the spaceport and board your ship.**

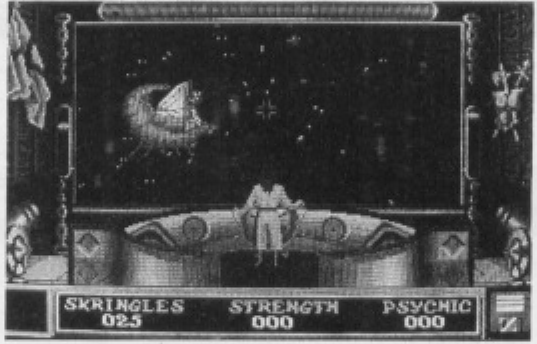
▶ **CHOOSE the top icon for Zapminola and take off...**



IN GENERAL

● **When travelling through space, keep the enemy as far away (and therefore as small) as possible while engaging in combat. As soon as you have disposed of a wave, accelerate towards the planet but slow down as soon as a fresh wave appears. Continue this process and you should reach your destination planet with the minimum of trouble.**

● **Don't go with the Flow, 'Flow' being a highly-illegal narcotic that many Zapminolans spend much of their time under the influence of. You will get a chance to buy some from a hippy pusher/junkie but JUST SAY NO! It's very expensive, lowers you psychic energy and slows your progress.**



FUSION

Electronic Arts

The ST version's official cheat mode, as provided by Mr Fusion himself, Bullfrog's Glenn Corpes.

Get onto the high-score table (easy to do as all the high scores are set to zero at the outset) and enter SWAMP THING (including the space) to activate the cheat mode. The next time you play, the following keys do the following things:

B Upgrades your present weapon to the next.
S Installs shields.
T Cycles through the further weapons available.
E This takes you into the cheat-mode cum level editor which allows you to flick back and forth through the levels with + and −. When changing a level, stay in the centre of the map, or else you could find yourself trapped outside the boundaries of the new level.

TIPS

NEXT MONTH!

- **JAP-TASTIC! LORDS OF THE RISING SUN tips!**
- **NIGHT NURSE! WEIRD DREAMS analysed!**
- **EVEN WHITER TIPS with BIO CHALLENGE!**
- **THE KRISTAL solution part II!**

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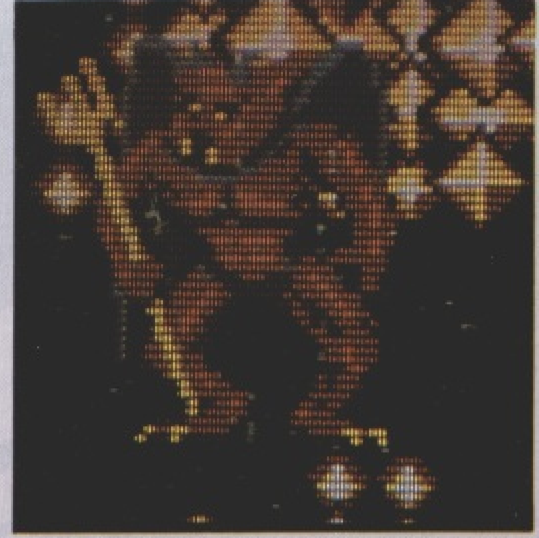
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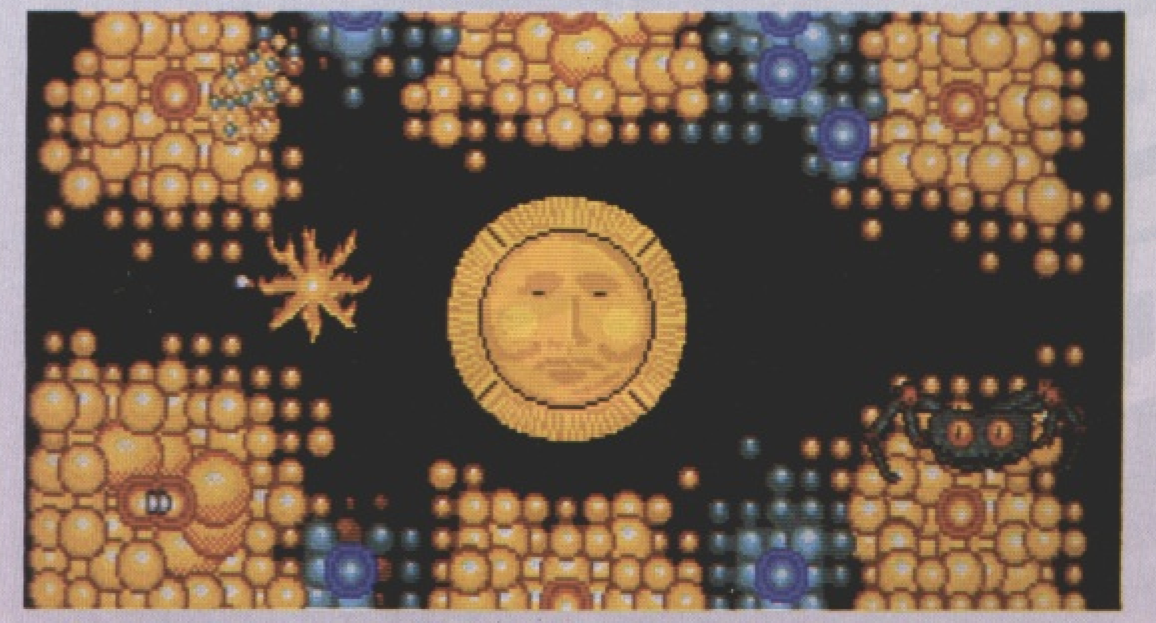
WicK



Abandon faith all ye who enter here... Activision's blend of occult strategy and arcade action may be fiendish, but Kati Hamza's bad...



Evil guardians come in various shapes, sizes and strengths It's their job to drain your energy by shooting and touching you. You reply by blasting pellets and sending him back to Pandaemonium for a short while – but your bullets only do damage during the day.



As the battle hots up, the screen is divided into growth-producing Good (yellow) and Evil (blue) portals. Cover the blue portals by shooting a path through the blue spores (turning them blood-red) and encourage the yellow growth to spread and stifle them. Some spores are smarter than others; round ones grow pretty haphazardly while cross-shaped, diamond and octagonal ones spread far more intelligently.



Under the all-seeing eye's auspicious glance, you pick the constellation in which the battle is to take place. Only the first three are available at the start of the game: complete one and you can play up to three levels higher. But don't get too eager – the later levels are pretty tough.

It doesn't take a tarot reading to tell you that Evil's always trying to gain universal domination over Good. It'll come as even less of a surprise to find that the forces of Evil are seeping on to distant stars through hellish portals – straight from Pandaemonium, no less.

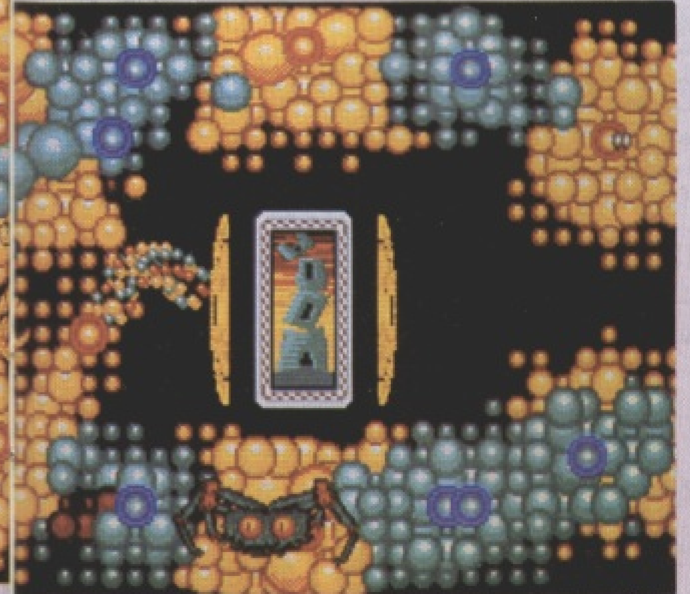
Only one mortal is capable of preventing this crisis; having survived the terrifying ordeal of being ritually chained to a ring of fire, you have become a warrior star.

Unusually, you have been granted the privilege of choosing the bias of the battles: Tactical, Arcade or a mixture of the two. One thing is certain: we're in for a hell of a fight!

ked



Capturing a constellation involves winning three battles – one on each of the crucial flashing stars.



Pplaying time (represented by the red marker on the snake/bird dial to the left of the screen) is divided into cycles of day and night, favourable to Good and Evil respectively. Good spores (white) appear during the day: pick them up and drop them strategically on areas of existing yellow growth to create more yellow portals. Evil spores are red – fail to destroy them in time and they fly off to create fresh enemy portals.

ST

There's no denying that this is an original variation on the basic shoot 'em up theme, with planting spores and creating portals bringing in a tactical element. The Sun and Moon cycles and the different types of growth cell create plenty of opportunity for using quite complex strategies, the most innovative of which is the inclusion of the more mystical aspects of the tarot: instead of operating like standard bonus icons, a couple of cards, the Wheel of Fortune in particular, have a less predictable effect. Playing them when the balance of power is even is a bit like playing a wild card. Each battle is pretty much the same in essence, so once you've hit on a successful tactic you can keep on using it over and over again. Some kind of variation on the basic structure or a bonus level might have generated more long-term interest; having said that, Wicked is initially very addictive and makes the most of its occult connections. Combined with the suitably spooky music, the bold and colourful graphics, straight from a tarot deck create an eerily supernatural atmosphere. The only real failing is that it's just a little bit repetitive – but not excessively so – and therefore may appeal more to the arcade enthusiast rather than the strategist.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	77%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	79%
VALUE	78%

OVERALL 79%





A

Gameplay and graphics are almost exactly the same as the ST version but the atmosphere is greatly enhanced by melodramtic Gothic music and more varied sound effects: dramatic drumbeats to signal that time is running out and different tunes which herald the creation and destruction of enemy spores, or a direct hit against a guardian, actually improve the gameplay by making it easier to tell what's going on. that's not really a significant enough improvement to justify the higher price-tag though.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	70%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	64%

OVERALL 77%

PC

Activision hasn't reached a decision on whether a PC version is to be developed yet. If it is, EGA will be supported and the price will presumably be nearer the £25 mark.



Once each day and night, the Sun or Moon shows a Tarot card. You play it by picking up the crystal it leaves behind before a roving maggot pushes it off the screen. It's important to select them carefully: Good ones hold extra firepower, a shield or extra lives, but evil ones can cause chaos.

COMPETITION

HAVE A WICKED SPENDING SPREE

Thanks to Activision

Founded four years ago by Paul Norris and Rupert Bowater, Binary Vision has, up until now, primarily been an 8-bit development house. Its first projects were the computer game interpretations of Frederick Forsyth's **The Fourth Protocol** and **Zoids** produced in collaboration with the Electronic Pencil Company (which just so happens to be situated in the same London office). After that came **Stifflip & Co** for Palace Software, which brought the Binary boys into contact with two of the company's greatest talents, Richard Joseph (who provided the sounds for both **Barbarian** games) and Richard Leinfellner, programmer of the 16-bit versions of **Barbarian** and the **Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit**. Both Richards went on to help out with **Wicked** – Joseph provided the Amiga soundtrack and Leinfellner play-tested and came up with general ideas for improvement. Since Joseph is



primarily an Amiga man, an ST music specialist, Wally Beben (the man behind the soundtracks for **R-Type** and **Tetris**) was brought in. Despite the fact that the two musicians were given identical briefs, they produced completely different scores. Paul Norris was responsible for **Wicked**'s concept and design. "The idea came from a pendant I was given as a present. The Pendant had the face of the sun in the centre and this sparked off the idea of doing something in a mythological vein." **Wicked** took 18 months to produce, and Paul describes the finished result as a 'tactical arcade game'. When it comes to playing games rather than creating them, **Nebulus** and **Populous** top Binary's hit parade. So What's next? "We're working on a project called **Insectivore,** another mix of tactical arcade and adventure, but this time the gameplay will be a little more action orientated."

Ever fancied a day's all expenses paid shopping frenzy in the heart of the capital? Well, your fantasy is now only a few questions away, because Activision is celebrating the release of **Wicked**, by bringing one lucky sod down to the Virgin Games Centre in Oxford Street for a whole day's spending frenzy!

The lucky winner will have £250 stuffed in his or her pocket to spend on whatever computer games take their fancy throughout the course of the day – and if that wasn't enough, there's a free nosh-up into the bargain.

Of course all your travelling expenses will be paid too. The 25 not-so-lucky runners-up will each receive an exclusive limited edition **Wicked** T-Shirt.

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1	Microprose Soccer	(Microprose)	17.47	17.47	10.47	10.47	10.47
2	Operation Wolf	(Ocean)	17.47	13.97	6.27	6.97	6.97
3	Robocop	(Ocean)	17.47	13.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
4	Afterburner	(Activision)	17.47	17.47	6.97	6.97	6.97
5	Populous	(Electronic Arts)	17.47	17.47	N.A	N.A	N.A
6	Real Ghostbusters	(Activision)	17.47	13.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
7	War in Middle Earth	(Tolkien)	13.97	13.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
8	Double Dragon	(Melbourne House)	13.97	13.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
9	Dragon Ninja	(Ocean)	17.47	17.47	6.97	6.97	6.97
10	Running Man	(Grandslam)	17.47	17.47	6.27	6.97	6.97
11	WEC Le Mans	(Imagine)	17.47	13.97	6.97	6.97	6.97
12	Falcon	(Mirrorsoft)	19.97	17.47	N.A	N.A	N.A
13	Barbarian 2	(Palace)	N.A	13.97	6.97	6.97	N.A
14	R-Type	(Electric Dreams)	17.47	13.99	6.97	6.97	6.97
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17	Lombard RAC Rally	(Mandarin)	17.47	17.47	N.A	N.A	N.A
18	Strip Poker 2	(Anco)	10.47	10.47	5.57	5.57	5.57
19	Vindicators	(Tengen)	17.47	13.97	5.57	6.27	6.27
20	Crazy Cars 2	(Titus)	17.47	17.47	6.97	6.97	6.97

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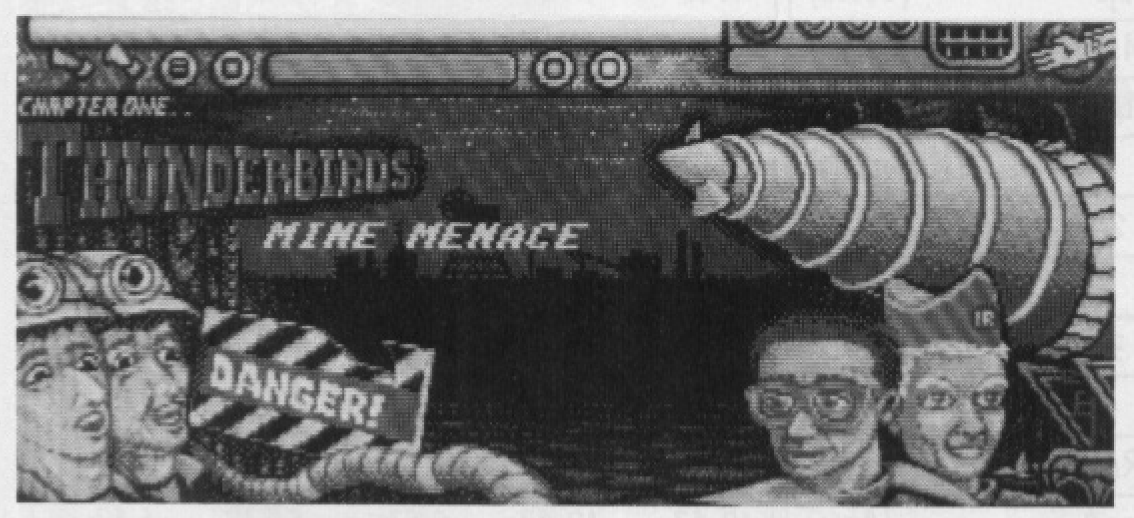
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Thunderbir

5...4...3...2...1! Gerry Anderson's classic 60's TV series has been given a new lease of life with Grandslam's 16-bit adaptation. Gary Whitta wonders if there are any strings attached.



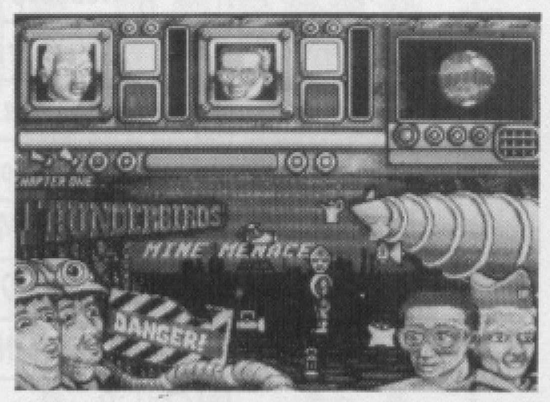
The first mission, Mine Menace asks you to save two stranded miners before they asphyxiate. The two team members on the case are Alan Tracy, who starts at the top of the mine, and the stuttering Brains who starts at the bottom after tunnelling in on Thunderbird 3 (the mole). To rescue the minders, both Alan and Brains must reach them and find a way to get them to safety.

International Rescue boss Jeff Tracy keeps an eye on things from the Thunderbirds' Pacific Island HQ. Four independent missions await the team, and two team members are assigned to each. Initially only the first mission can be attempted, complete that and a password is given to allow access to the next, and so on.

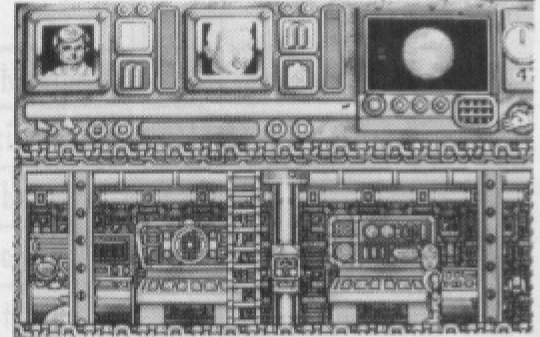


Teque's interpretation of Gerry Anderson's cult puppet show is a multi-level arcade adventure in the same style as the company's last effort, Prison. International Rescue's four missions range from a standard rescue operation to a daring bank robbery and finally a quest to save the world from nuclear domination.

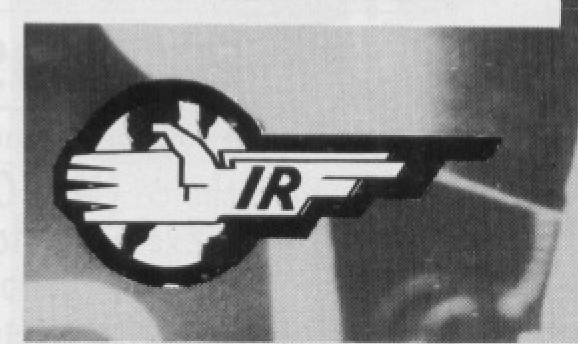
The flick-screen action is mostly puzzle-orientated, and with numerous tricks and traps scattered about each of the scenarios, it's all too easy for Scott, Virgil, Brains and the gang to come a cropper. But under the advice of Gerry Anderson (who collaborated with Teque to ensure the game retained the spirit of the series), none of the team ever actually die – even if a mission fails they're saved by a rival rescue organisation.



Before the mission gets underway, the two IR team members each select two items of equipment from the inventory. If the wrong items are selected (there are quite a few red herrings) it may be impossible to progress past a certain point and the mission is doomed to failure before it even begins.



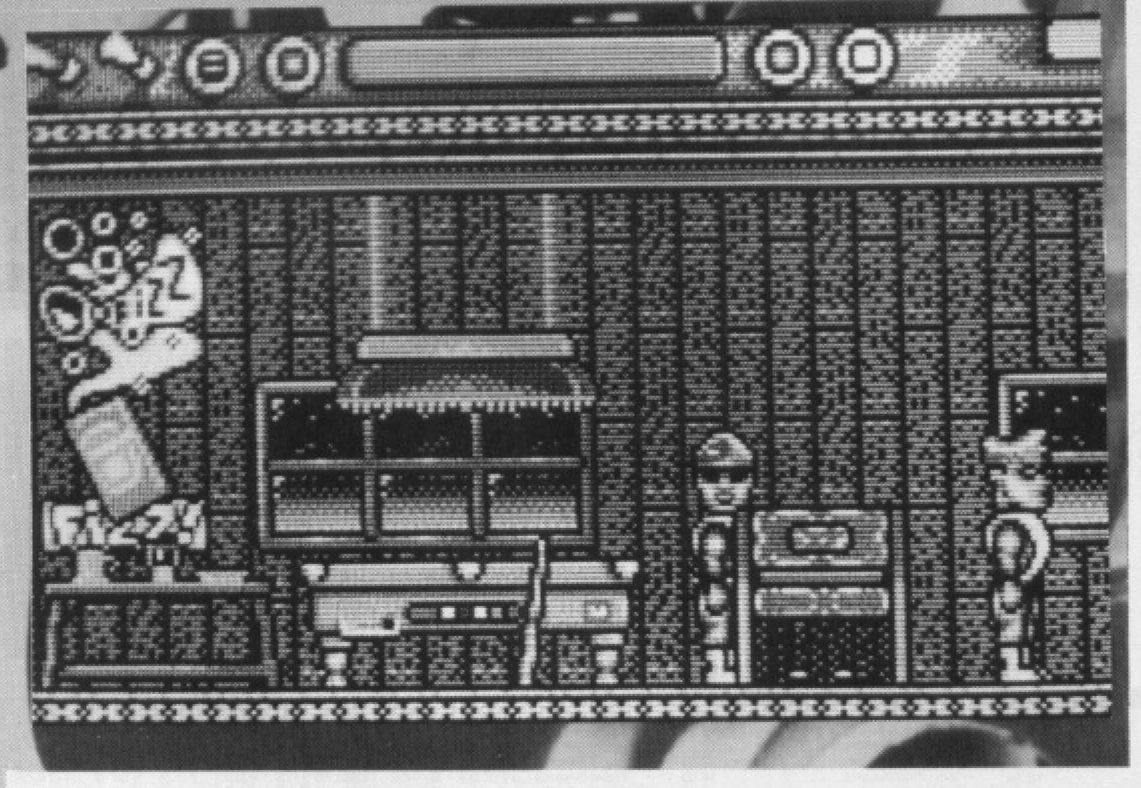
The second mission, Sub Crash is set aboard a wrecked Submarine stranded on the sea bed. Alan and Gordon Tracy's job is to find some way to shut down the overloading nuclear reactor, rescue the remaining crew and bring the sub back to the surface. While trying to complete the mission, Alan and Gordon also have to worry about keeping themselves alive – the reactor is leaking deadly radioactive poison and there's always the risk of explosion.



rds



The final mission is not surprisingly the most difficult of them all. The time limit is short, and no clues are given before or during the mission. International Rescue's arch-enemy The Hood has stolen the blueprints of the Thunderbirds craft and unless his demands are met, he will sell them to terrorists. Virgil and Scott must find The Hood's missile base hideout (it's heavily disguised at first), get the plans and escape. At the same time, The Hood's missiles must be deactivated to stop him holding the world to nuclear ransom.



A

Thunderbirds is a competent arcade adventure – one of the best to date in fact. Controlling not one but two members of International Rescue and having to use each for different tasks is a novel twist, and the puzzles are suitably logical. The difficulty level is well set, so each mission is just that little bit harder than the previous one. Graphically the International Rescue boys have been depicted well – they walk in an almost puppet-like fashion (with no visible strings!) and the backdrops are colourful and well defined. The in-game sound is sparse but pleasing and there's also an accurate digitised rendition of the Thunderbirds theme – complete with speech. For these reasons, arcade adventure addicts and mappers will love it, but fans who were expecting something more action-orientated could be in for a disappointment. The Thunderbird vehicles themselves, for example, aren't featured at all, apart from in a few short digitised sequences. Surely the game should have been centred around them, or at least have incorporated them in some kind of sub-section – the game is, after all, named after them. Ultimately, this a competent arcade adventure – but a very poor tie-in.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	68%
PLAYABILITY	70%
VALUE	69%

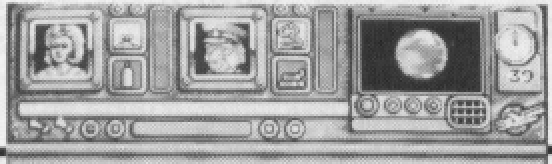
OVERALL 69%



This version is not expected to differ greatly from the Amiga. Graphically it should be identical, and the only minor difference is expected to be in the sound department. It should be out by the time you read this at the same price – £19.99.



Work is only just beginning, but if everything goes according to plan, a finished version should appear sometime later in the year.



In Bank Job, Lady Penelope and Parker's mission is to rob the vaults of the Bank of England to retrieve stolen files. The action here is a little more arcade orientated, as the pair are constantly dogged by burly security guards. Finding the vault is one thing, but actually opening it is another.

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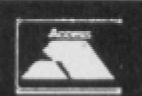
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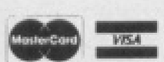
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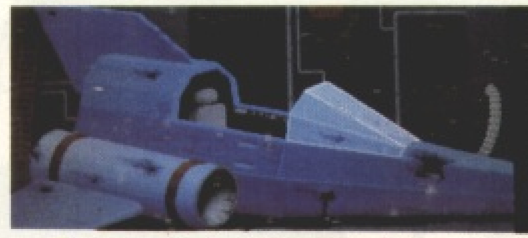
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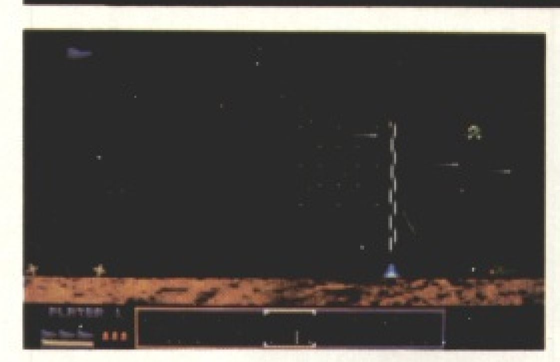
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VDT may be a new company, but the concept behind its debut blaster owes its soul to the earliest days of arcade action. Gary Penn has no time for nostalgia as he prepares to defend the dropzone...



The first time you play, an extraneous sequence is shown with a lone space pilot giving the thumbs up before the craft's cockpit slides shut. More impressive though is this Game Over scene with an effective heat distortion illusion at the rear of the broken craft.

Datastorm



Not only can two players take turns at dishing out doses of death, they can play together as a team. However this isn't as much fun as it sounds, as the ships tend to behave as though joined by an invisible thread – especially when you want to scroll the screen in opposite directions!

Visionary Design Technology, the team responsible for the 16-bit conversions of **Dragon's Lair**, is currently negotiating a distribution deal with a UK company for the release of its first stand-alone production.

Datastorm's superfluous scenario fails to disguise a shoot 'em up in the classic mould of those old Williams coin-op favourites **Defender** and **StarGate**. However, whereas **Defender** and **StarGate** only featured a handful of adversaries, **Datastorm** is infested by 128 villains of varying destructive capabilities.

Some aliens leave behind Tokens on their demise, allowing you to collect a temporary Shield, an 'autofire' feature, Missiles which launch whenever a Pod is abducted, or increased firepower.

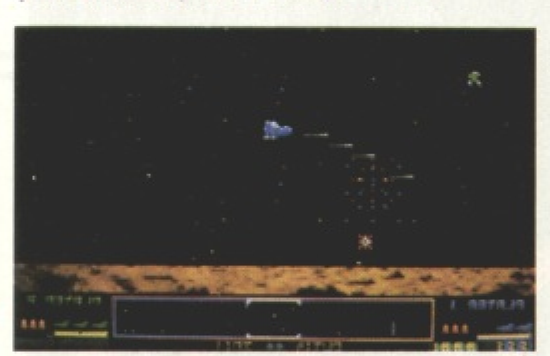


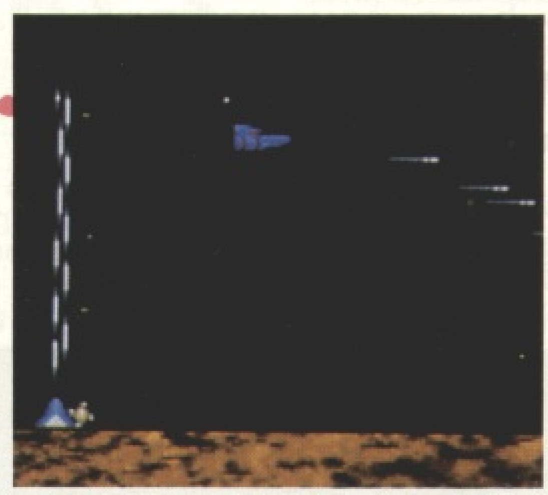


The title screen features a comprehensive guide to what you can expect to encounter, set against a listenable, bouncy tune.

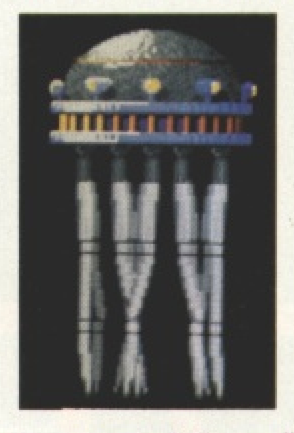


Landers patrol the landscape and occasionally descend on an unfortunate Pod. Failure to reach the scene in time sees the Pod turn into a Traitor (which behaves much like a Pod – except deadlier) and the Lander becomes a Mutant, which chases after you relentlessly like a man possessed.





A slice of the typically pulse-racing, adrenaline-inducing horizontally scrolling action. The ship (a futuristic descendant of the Reliant Robin) thrusts and turns in a frenzy of blasting action. Self preservation aside, the objective is to protect eight ground-based Pods – and the best way of doing this is to scoop them up, one at a time, and deposit them in the Portal. However there are a couple of 'spanners' in the works...



The Space Squid (left) and the Intergalactic Space Skull are found floating around on every fifth level. Both throw out smaller versions of themselves, and both are only destroyed with plenty of hits.

One of the most innovative touches is a swarm of aliens collectively known as the Tornado. Its appearance is made known by an uncomfortable pause in the action followed by an ominous rumbling which grows louder as the storm approaches. After a few seconds of unnerving hot pursuit, the 'particles' (Blitters) turn into aggressive Mutants.



A Someone's been playing StarGate and Dropzone – a lot. DataStorm is similar to both the Williams Corporation's and Archer Maclean's horizontal scrollers, but with a greater variety of aliens. Perhaps too many... as a result, some seem extraneous and few have identifiable personalities to make them more than just sprites moving in predictable patterns. The addition of extra equipment is also detrimental as it tends to restrict the game's learning curve: part of Defender's appeal was in learning to control the ship then improving those skills – a form of gratification very similar to that gleaned from learning how to control the craft in Virus. In this case, relying on the appearance of extra items to save your bacon tends to make the player lazy. That said, there are some genuinely neat additions, like the missiles and sudden mass attacks. More often than not the action is unbelievably fast – so busy that the onlooker is left wondering how on Earth you can see where you are, let alone survive. The whole screen becomes alive with colour as dozens of pixels shower as dozens of aliens bite the space dust. It's not uncommon to come away from playing with sweat dripping from your brow, your heart pounding and spots twinkling before your eyes. There are times when things slow down, and at worst the proceedings grind to a halt when the disk is accessed, but unforgivable as these flaws are, Datastorm comes highly recommended.

PRICE	TBA
RELEASE DATE	TBA
GRAPHICS	81%
SOUND	87%
PLAYABILITY	89%
VALUE	N/A

OVERALL 84%



Unfortnately there's no version planned.



Sadly no version planned either.



Ocean's latest conversion of a Taito coin-op features boomerang-throwing teddy bears, hot air balloons and a scuba-diving Kiwi. Enough to ruffle even Brian Nesbitt's feathers.

The New Zea

Bashed enemies usually leave behind a piece of fruit, but they occasionally leave an extra weapon instead. Weapons available include a bomb (that looks good but is only effective at short range), a magic wand and, most deadly of them all, a laser beam.

Cutesy coin-ops have been around almost as long as the video game itself. Perhaps the first to appear were Nintendo's **Donkey Kong** and the classic **Mario Brothers** games. Since then there's always been a market for stubby-limbed wide-eyed heroes, but more so since the release of the game that really sparked the cute revolution – Taito's **Bubble Bobble**.

Subsequently there's been **Rainbow Islands** (Taito's own follow-up to **Bubble Bobble**), Sega's **Dynamite Dux** and Irem's **Legend Of Hero Tonma** among others. But Taito has always been the master of the sugar-and-spice game. Strangely enough, its most recent effort, **The New Zealand Story** seemed to pass through the arcades relatively unnoticed.

Occasionally Kiwi has to traverse a flooded area, and when he does he dons oxygen tanks and snorkle. Water is especially dangerous, as not only is Kiwi up against a depleting oxygen supply, but also against the weird and wonderful creatures that inhabit the waters – like this spiked crustacean.



The storyline tells of a heroic Kiwi chick's quest to free his little feathery chums from the clutches of an evil walrus. One Kiwi chick is found at the end of each of the 20 levels imprisoned in a bird cage, and freeing him is accomplished simply by touching him. Getting there in the first place is another matter entirely.

Kiwis can't fly, so to reach his feathered friends, your baby bird has to run and jump his way there, using the platforms and ladders to the full – while avoiding (or shooting) the porcupines, teddy bears and other cutesy bad guys that patrol them both on the ground and in the air.

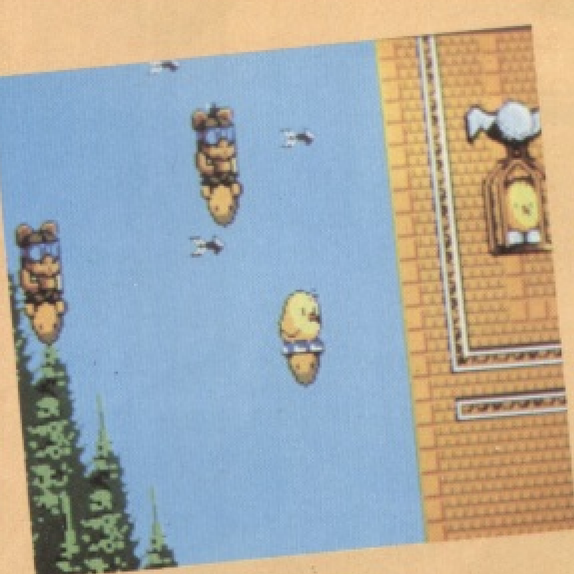
In classic Taito tradition, there are many secret bonuses to be found. A joystick icon allows enhanced control over the birds and balloons, while the clock freezes all the aliens, allowing you to wipe them all out. There's also a 'Book Of Death' that acts like a smart bomb and a mirror that warps you to the end of the level.



...aland Story

When every fourth Kiwi chick is rescued, a huge bad guy such as a whale or ink-squirting octopus appears. The guardians are too heavily armoured to be shot from the outside, so Kiwi jumps into their mouths and fires away from inside their stomachs. In between pumping away at the stomach wall (about 40 shots are required to kill it), Kiwi also has to avoid the acid droplets that leak from the 'roof'.





There are times when although it's necessary to travel upwards, there just aren't any platforms around. Time to look for another way up. Occasionally a hot-air balloon appears that Kiwi can ride in, but he puts his life at risk when he does so as the balloon is very vulnerable and explodes when hit by enemy fire, taking Kiwi with it. A safer way to travel is to ride on the backs of the geese or teddy bear heads left by shot-down enemies or to hang from a metal balloon that can only be shot with a laser.

A The one thing that's most difficult to recreate when converting one of Taito's cutesy coin-ops, is the simplicity and brilliance of the game design, and the boys at Choice Software have certainly succeeded. The New Zealand Story is tremendous fun to play – the action is clean-cut and uncomplicated, and the difficulty strikes just the right balance between compulsion and frustration. With 20 levels, there's no doubt as to the game's lastability, and the completely over-the-top cutesy graphic style and catchy jingles that play throughout add to the fun. Brilliant stuff – hopefully it'll get more recognition than the coin-op.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	81%
SOUND	86%
PLAYABILITY	88%
VALUE	73%

OVERALL 84%

ST Apart from the mandatory differences in colour and sound, this version isn't expected to differ in any way from the Amiga. It's due out soon at a price of £19.99

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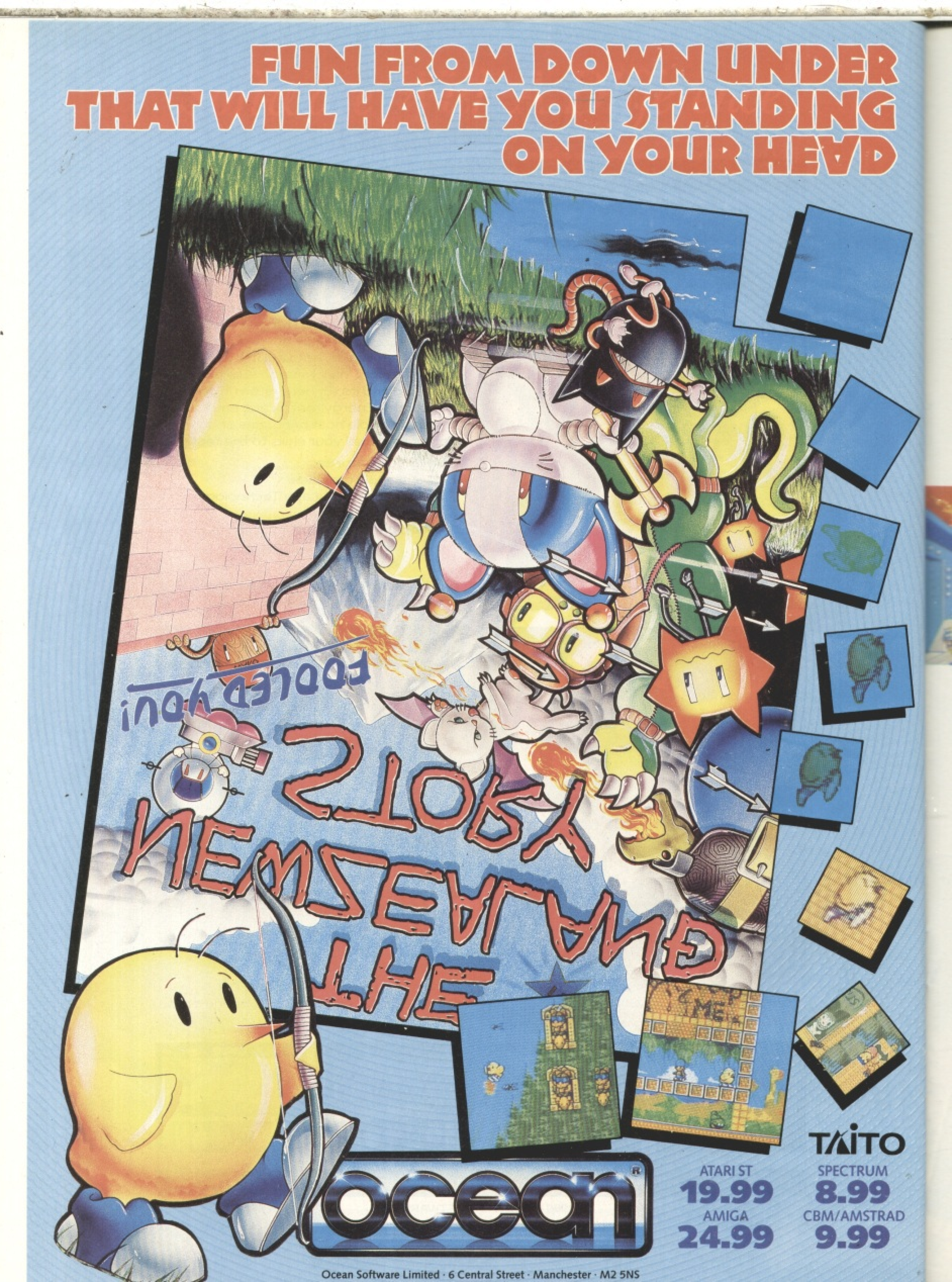
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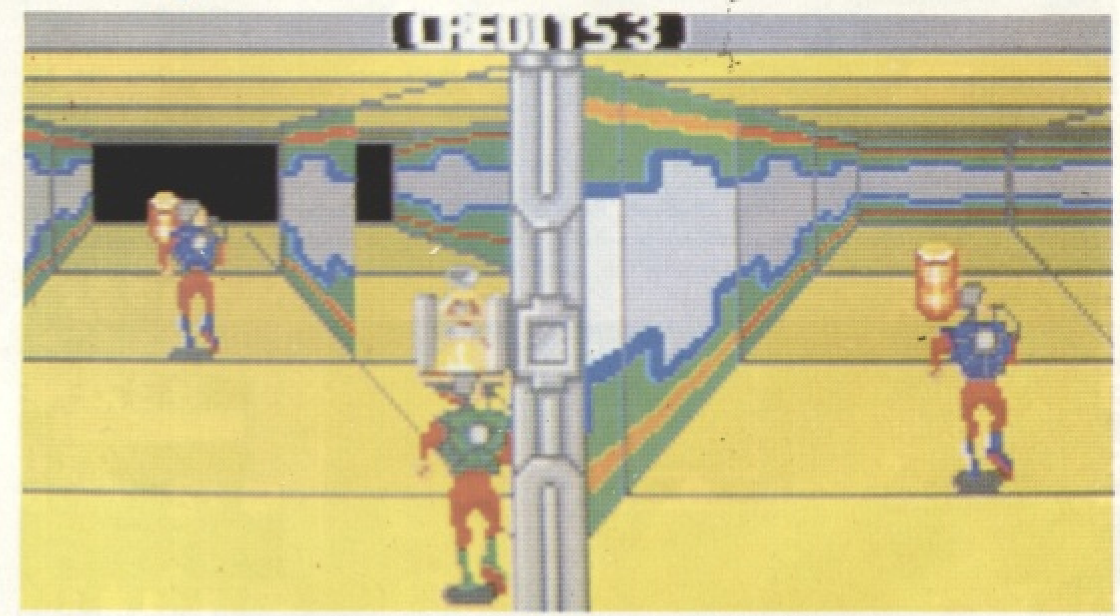

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Xybots

The animated opening sequence underestimates the task ahead of you – but it's typical of the neat graphical touches that appear throughout.



Gordon Houghton makes his way carefully through the underground labyrinth that is Domark's latest conversion of an Atari coin-op...



Energy wears down naturally as time passes, but it's more heavily depleted by Xybot attacks. It can be recovered by collecting energy pods, like this one, which bleep loudly as you approach. Other beneficial objects (some carried by menial yellow Xybots) include weapons – which double or triple firepower – and coins, which allow purchases in the end-of-level shop.

The story behind Domark's second Tengen licence runs something like this... war-like aliens, with nothing better to do, have invaded the planet and established a huge underground complex.

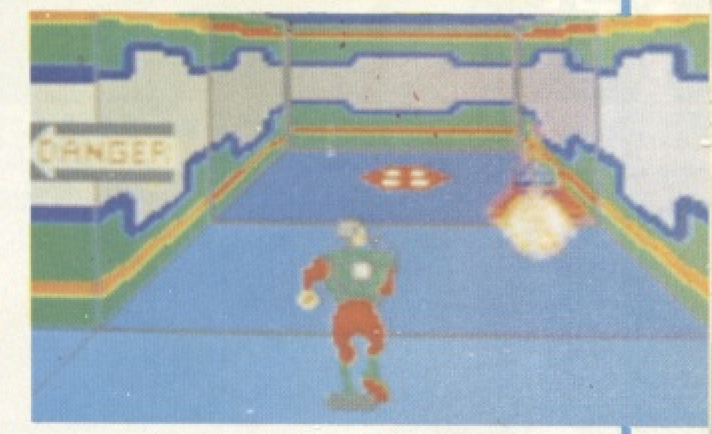
This complex is divided into numerous sub-levels guarded by mean metal security police (Xybots) and their superiors (Master Xybots). Only a fool would dare face the awesome power of this alien onslaught, right? Well, in this case two fools have volunteered: Major Rock Hardy and his laser-toting chum, Captain Ace Gunn.

Each maze layout which the pair encounter is different, but it's invariably based on one of three major designs: a simple labyrinthine structure, corridors which run into great caverns, or box-rooms whose walls need to be destroyed or opened to progress.

The dynamic duo have two kinds of weapon to assist in their task: a Laser Gun (extra cannons can be added) and a Zapper, which can stun or cause greater damage depending on the enhancements you purchase for it. Losing a life means starting the level afresh; losing five means game over.

In two-player mode, each character's area is displayed separately and it's first come first served for bonus coins and objects. Either way, the control method is the same: the screen shifts in 'blocks', with Ace and Rock turning through 90 degrees.



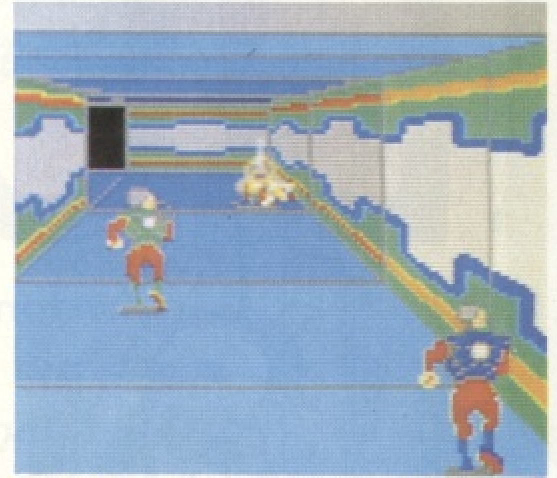


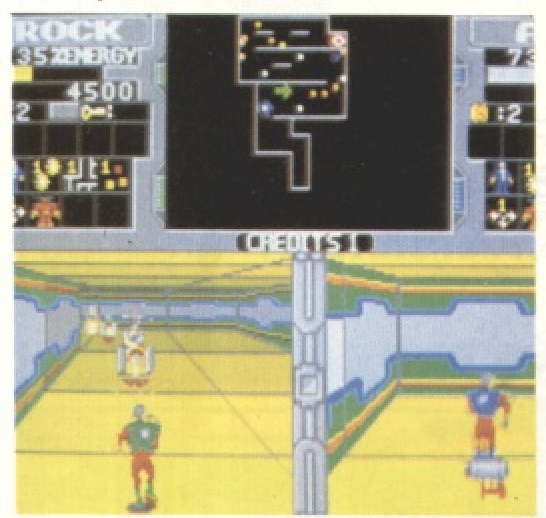
A menacing Xybot usually guards the end-of-level Transporter, otherwise it's just a matter of stepping on the lift and taking a downwards ride. However, more discerning players will use their keys wisely, to discover the hidden warps which allow you to skip stages...

REVIEW

The most useful purchase available at the shopping stage is a wall map for the next level, but other items include Enemy Location Maps, Shot and Shield Customisations, handy Keys and strap-on devices which slow energy loss.

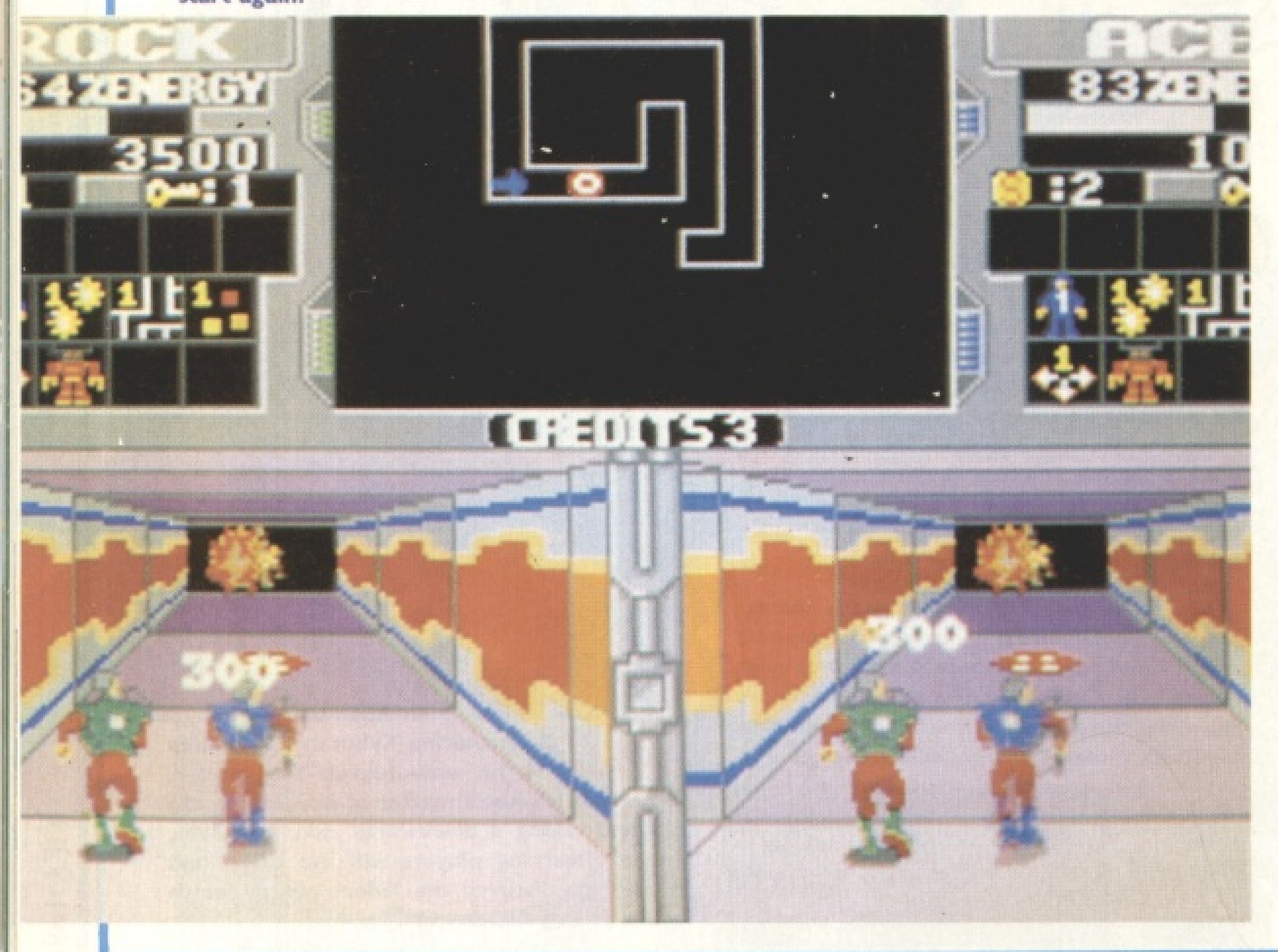
All robots are harmful if you give them enough time, but some are more immediately aggressive. The tougher the robot, the greater the reward for destroying them (up to a maximum of 600 points). If the enemy is out of sight but in range, a danger signal tells just where the trouble lies, and quick reactions are needed to spin round before you're hit.





Transport around each level is achieved in three ways, the simplest of which is just walking. Sometimes, however, it's necessary to utilise these Transporters, and some rooms require keys to unlock their secrets. Other sections can be destroyed with your Laser – so it's always worthwhile unleashing a blast on a wall which is otherwise impassable.

Approximately every 10 levels, Rock and Ace face a Master Xybot, who spews out multiple bullets at once – progress can then only be made if each of his orifices is disabled. Should our musclebound chums fail, they are humiliatingly sent back several levels to start again.



ST

Xybot's faults are mostly those of the arcade game itself – mainly that there's not much variety in the gameplay or the graphics. Also, each duel is a simple question of being quicker with the trigger than the opposition, and losing energy is more down to your own lack of concentration than anything the enemy can throw at you. However, the random placement of robots means that there's always the chance that you'll turn the corner into a stream of laser fire or (if you're trigger happy) shoot your partner by mistake. This, coupled with the large number of maze designs, the Warps, Transporters, Secret Rooms (and all the personal customisations you can buy or find) helps to sustain interest. The movement (particularly the 3D Wall effect) is convincing, managing to capture much of the coin-op's feel, and the game is packed with neat touches (such as the laser splashes on the walls, the sound effects and end-of-level tunes). The control method, on the other hand, is initially confusing, though it's hard to see another way in which the coin-op's two button system could have been implemented, and once you're accustomed to the awkwardness, it works well. If you were to judge Xybots purely as an arcade conversion, it would score very highly; as a game in its own right it's not brilliant – but it is good, coming into its own with two players.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	76%
SOUND	71%
PLAYABILITY	86%
VALUE	79%

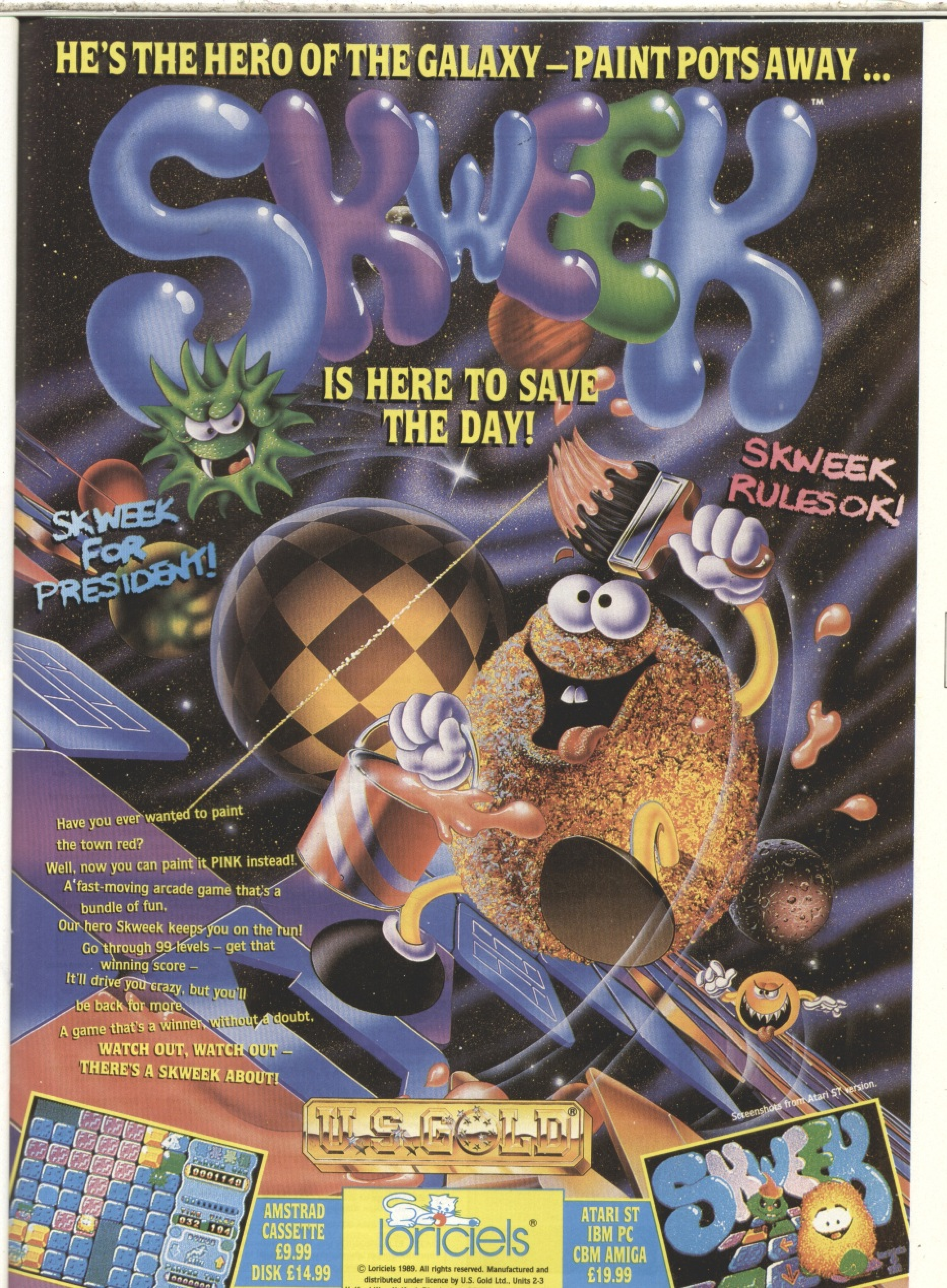
OVERALL 78%

A

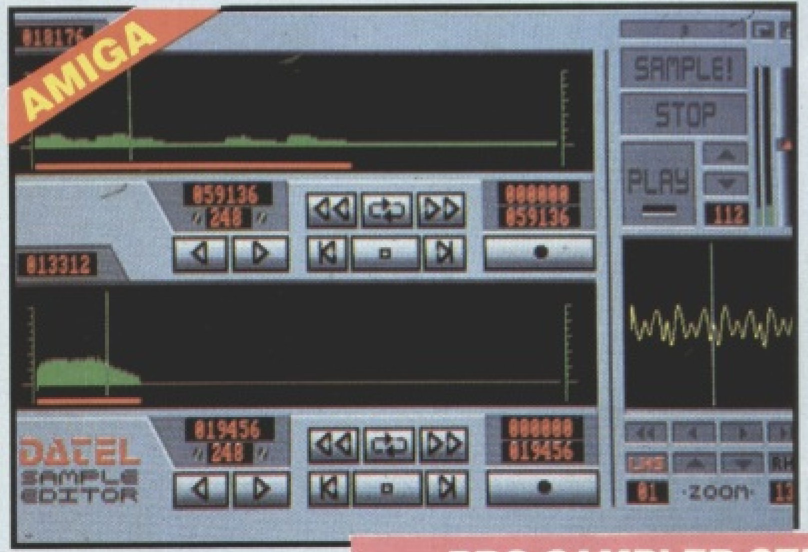
As this is yet another direct port from the ST, there'll be no differences between the two, apart from slight changes in the colour pallette and enhanced sound. Priced at £19.99, the release is set for July 15th.

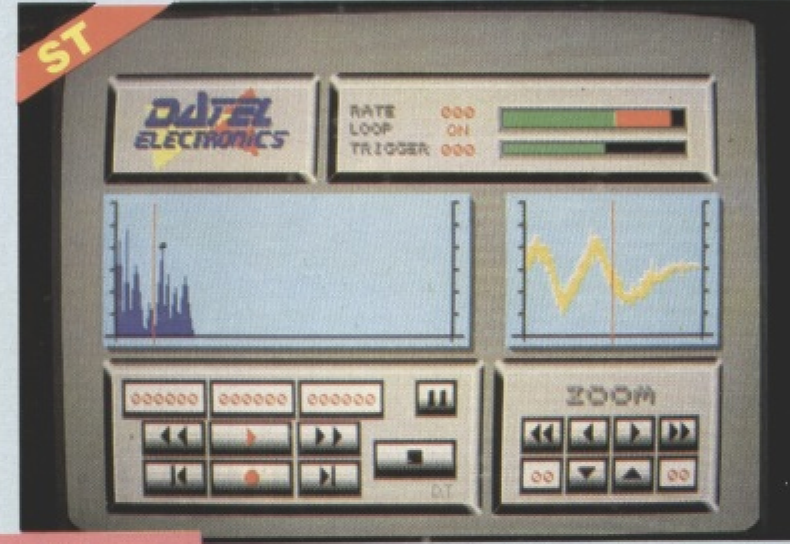


PC or not PC, that is the question. The decision whether or not to produce an IBM-compatible Xybots hasn't yet been made – how well the ST and Amiga versions fare will certainly be a contributing factor.


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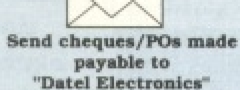


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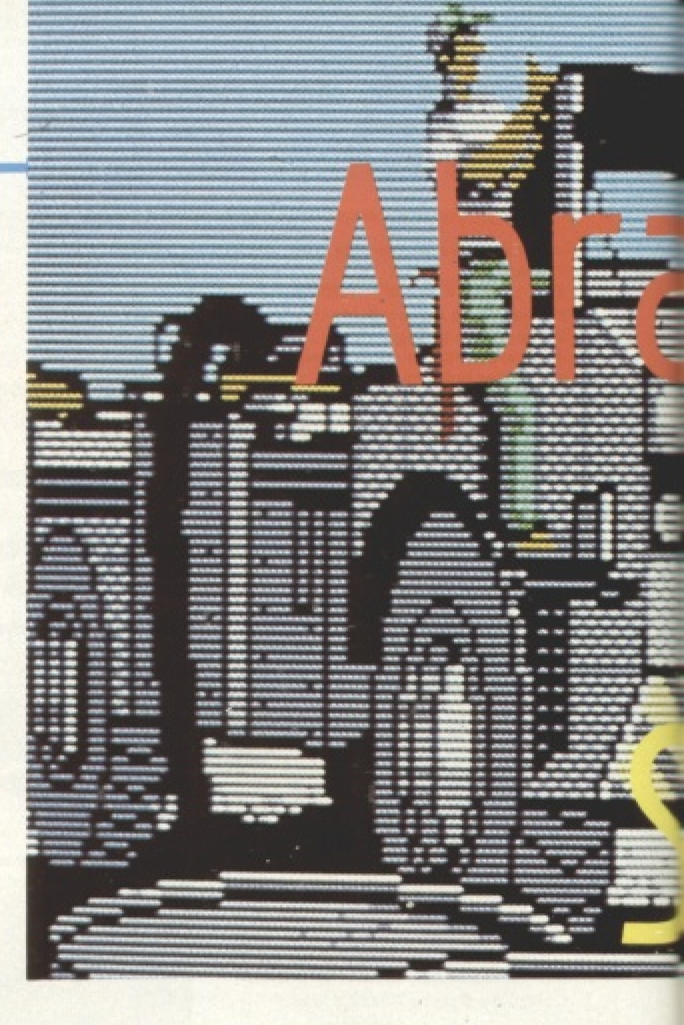
You've flown planes, commanded submarines and crawled in the mud... now you can roll out the barrel as a new wave of tank games trundles onto the simulation battlefield. Robert Browning makes caterpillar tracks to try out the two at the forefront of the invasion.

Fighter planes. Been there, done that. What's new is tank simulators. Not futuristic shoot and run simulators like **Battle Zone**, nowadays the sophisticated tank simulator expects you to master the skill of a tank's entire crew, from the commander to the gunner.

Real tanks have complex guns which must be fed the right sort of ammo to kill the target in front of you. Real tanks don't have radar to find the enemy. Real tanks have enemies in the skies, on tracks and behind just about every bush, enemies with sophisticated weapons which must be spotted identified avoided and neutralised.

Until the arrival of the new MBT currently being produced for the British-Army, the most exciting tank to get your hands on is probably the American M1A1 Abrams.

The Abrams is armed with the German 120mm smooth bore gun, a sophisticated targeting and gunnery system, and protected by British made Chobham armour. This is 60 tonnes of oblivion-delivering technology, every bit as complicated and intriguing as an F-16. Try one and see...

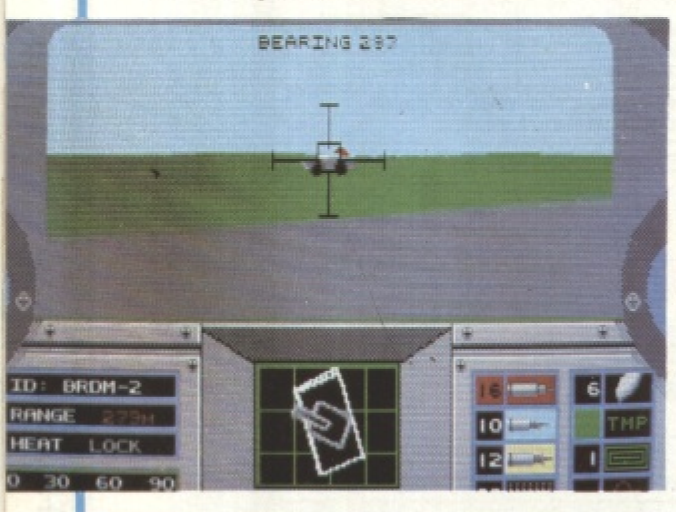


This is the best view you get, and it's claustrophobic in here. All of the switches on the panels work and it's up to you to make sure that all necessary systems are engaged before attempting combat. Nothing quite so embarrassing as an attempt to launch smoke when the launchers are empty.



When Soviet tanks outnumber you eight to one you need an edge, and I'm not sure that I've got it, being in command of one lonely Abrams isn't enough. I need support...

"Sagger flash bearing 140!" True enough the gunner has spotted the telltale flash of a Soviet shoulder launched Sagger missile. Hand-launched from behind a bush all the operator has to do is to guide it to the target and we're history. "Make smoke. Reverse. Gunner, load APERS, target 140, range 1,400 meters. Shoot!" It's going to take the gunner at least four seconds to get off the anti-personnel round. Just hope the smoke spoils the rat's aim in the meantime. Damn! He's not at the top of the hill, he's half way down it. "Gunner, Adjust down. Shoot."

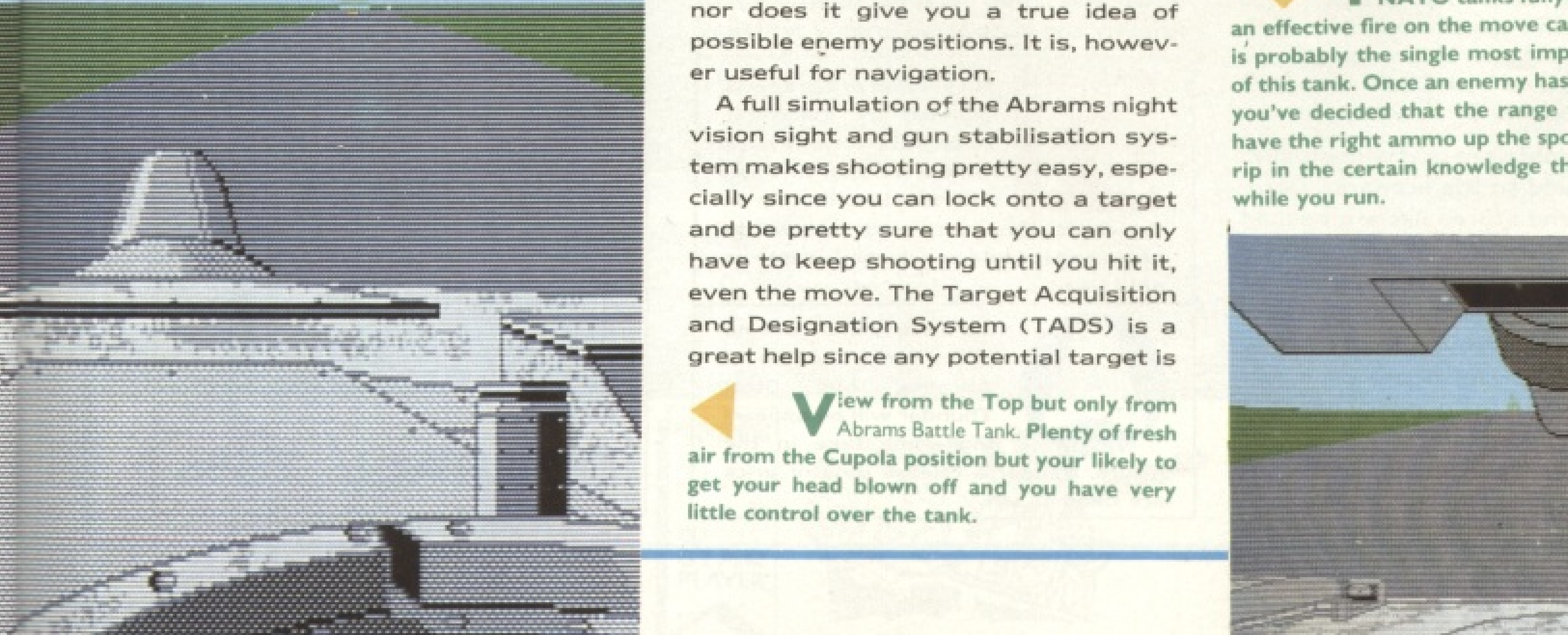


The Gunner's seat. This is where the damage is done. The view of the world is restricted, but you can turn on the infra-red kit for night work or to see through the smoke. Shooting is easier with EA's tank, in fact once you have locked on it's pretty automatic. Steel Thunder, however demands much more skill. It's up to you to select the right ammo from the panel, get the range and allow lead on the target.

ams Battle Tank MEETS Steel Thunder

Abrams Battle Tank

Electronic Arts offering provides a pretty full simulation of the M1A1 with a number of operations divided between the different stations in a tank. Some tasks, for instance, can only be done from the gunner's turret, but most operations can be carried out from the commander's position, including driving the tank. This is not so realistic since the commander would simply pass direct orders to the driver.



The displays inside the tank make little attempt to re-create the inside of a real tank, instead they concentrate on giving as much necessary information as possible, including the relationship between the tank's hull and the turret. That may sound pretty silly but it can be very tricky sometimes, especially if you forget that the gun is in fact pointing in a different direction to the tank.

Damage to the tank is reported via messages and on a damage indicator screen where the relevant section changes colour according to the amount of damage sustained. As hits are suffered so functions begin to fail. Lose your sight and you end up trying to blast away the enemy from the Cupola position – that's sitting up top with your head sticking out.

A map is available to the commander but it reveals very little. It does not provide a full view of the battlefield nor does it give you a true idea of possible enemy positions. It is, however useful for navigation.

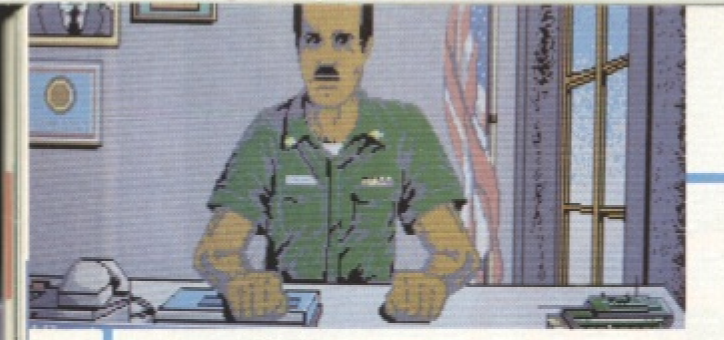
A full simulation of the Abrams night vision sight and gun stabilisation system makes shooting pretty easy, especially since you can lock onto a target and be pretty sure that you can only have to keep shooting until you hit it, even the move. The Target Acquisition and Designation System (TADS) is a great help since any potential target is highlighted if it is in view of the main sight, and identified automatically. Only three types of ammunition are provided. Sabot, HEAT and an experimental anti-helicopter wire-guided round called AX. You have one coax-mounted .30cal to play with.

View from the Top but only from Abrams Battle Tank. **Plenty of fresh air from the Cupola position but your likely to get your head blown off and you have very little control over the tank.**

A keyboard map helps you keep track of the 24 or so keys which control the tank. Joysticks can be used, but frankly they are better left in the drawer. Driving the tank is the easy bit, once you get used to it.

All game scenarios are based in Germany, with the Soviets providing the fun. Three levels of difficulty determine the type of opposition you will face, and som po-faced Colonel greets you at the start to set you on your way. Eight missions are offered with full details and a map for each provided in the manual.

The Abrams is one of the few NATO tanks fully-equipped with an effective fire on the move capability, which is probably the single most important feature of this tank. Once an enemy has been selected, you've decided that the range is fair and you have the right ammo up the spout, you can let rip in the certain knowledge that you can hit while you run.

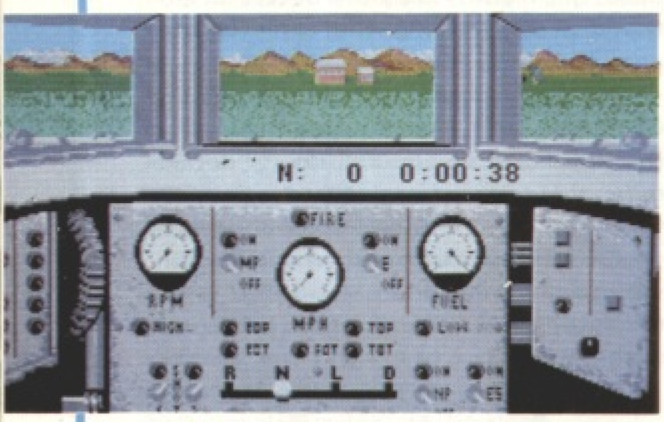


Steel Thunder

Accolade's simulation is altogether more complex. To begin with it isn't just a simulation of the M1A1, you can also elect to drive the more common M60A3, the M3 Bradley or the M48A5 Patton to boot.

As with the EA simulator you are expected to oversee the functions of the entire crew, but the approach is much more rigorous. For example, you can't move the tank unless you first move to the driver's position. From the commander's position you can only direct the tank by giving orders to the driver via a few keys which are assigned set tasks such as 'drive straight to target' or 'circle'. And there are a lot more things you must take care of, you even have to turn all of the electric circuits on and the engine before to get underway. With the Abrams game you just lay down smoke by pressing the smoke key, with this simulation you must order the canisters to be loaded first!

Also in contrast, the displays inside the tank make every effort to simulate the insides of a tank. The needles buttons and lights are pretty confusing but they all add to the scenario. Damage reports and stores list are passed down on a clipboard.



The Commander's seat – you won't spend much time here. The view might be better but you can't fire the gun, that's the gunner's job. Useful, though, to check the map to find the fastest way home.

Here you can order the gunner to destroy a target selected by you and he gets on with it. If you aren't happy with the guy's performance then you must get down to the gunnery position and do the job yourself.

You don't get the same degree of target acquisition and automatic lock on that you have with EA's version, instead you must ask the gunner to identify the target whereupon he responds with the target details, usually it's a tree or a hill, or he gets it wrong. Something you only discover when a previously described pile of 'rubble' starts shooting at you.



Also, you're expected to compensate for the speed and range of targets by shooting ahead, though the stabilised gun and ballistics computer are a great help. The range of ammunition is greater, though what you can use rather depends on the vehicle you take out. Sabot, HEAT, high-explosive plastic, anti-personnel, TOW missile and armour-piercing .50cal bullets must be selected and loaded prior to every mission.

The graphics aren't all that sharp, but they are quite varied. If you can cope with the immediate foreground washing up like the sea on Brighton beach then you can manage the floating tanks and enjoy the slightly more lavish scenery.

There are a lot of controls to play with, so the keyboard overlay provided is vital. The game comes with 24 missions which vary in complexity, fortunately the information provided on the move is quite comprehensive with the map giving positions of known and suspected enemy activity.

ST No version of Abrams is planned by Electronic Arts, but Accolade says that a version of Steel Thunder is definitely on the cards. However, work has yet to begin and it could be released as late as next year.



As before, there are no plans for a version of Abrams, but Steel Thunder will be appearing some time in the future. Neither a release date or price are fixed as yet.

The Sagger is the most effective Soviet anti-tank weapon and they are a real pain. Damn hard to find and hit and they can do a lot of damage. At this range you have two options but you must think fast. Machine gun him or run him over, the latter option leaves less to chance.

PC The difference between these two games is very marked. If you want to get involved, really playing the part of a tank commander, suffering the ear-ache, the claustrophobia and the stress then **Steel Thunder** is by far the more accurate simulation. The graphics are better in some respects and poorer in others – mostly they just take some getting used to. Eventually you will stop asking the gunner to identify hills and trees. But this is a busy game with lots to think about, demanding a great deal of concentration, quick thinking and a steady nerve. The better simulation of the two. **Abrams Battle Tank** though, is ideal for those who just want a quick shoot-out. It isn't going to keep you busy for hours on end, but it will satisfy the user who just wants to pick it up and play for a short while. In fact in that role it is highly recommended. Tank simulators appear to be the 'next big thing' in computer gaming – and fortunately there's enough variety on offer in these two to satisfy both the nit-picking specialist and the trigger-happy arcade ace. The choice is yours...

ABRAMS BATTLE TANK

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	78%

OVERALL 75%

STEEL THUNDER

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Our Now
GRAPHICS	68%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	76%
VALUE	82%

OVERALL 75%

DEMOS

The accent this month is most definitely on graphics, and surprisingly it's PC pictures taking the centre stage for a change. The VGA demos pictured here span four 5.25" disks and take up positively humonguous amounts of memory.

This range comes as a demo with most VGA displays and cards, you should get it when you buy your VGA system (that much!). Still, we thought you'd like to see what a really wicked display adaptor was like. The pictures are a mixture of digitised, digitised and tweaked and hand-drawn images, and cover just about everything but the kitchen sink.

On a lighter note, the Amiga Public Domain Library has a cracking selection of all the latest demos, and as an example of this they sent us a lot of old games... huh? No seriously, the two demo disks we received contained a compilation of all the old classic arcade games...

Amoebas is a rip-roaring **Invaders** clone, and as blasts from the past go really breathes life into the old dog. **Asteroids** is a very close clone of the original Atari coin-op, you know, the old vector graphics blaster. **Missile** is a clone of the similarly vintage Atari **Missile Command**, and a playable version at that. As a nostalgia trip it's hard to beat, and terrific value for money.

By far the best thing to happen to the Amiga in a long time is the **Tree Frog** demo. Yes friends, you too can have your own African Tree Frog Simulator in the comfort of your own home. Just turn it on and let it sit there in the corner of your room, and all your friends will think you've got a whacky new bug-eyed pet. It comes free with it's own endless supply of flies, so no messy feeding and it's completely electronic, so there's no mucking out either... Coo!

Kingsway Computer Services specialise in Amiga and PC public domain programs, and as well as boring but very useful stuff like word processors, spellcheckers, spreadsheets and databases... zzzzzzzzz... snork! Sorry, nodded off there. It also does a range of winning graphics and art demos, plus some absolutely wicked games. Like the **Ford Car Simulator**, for example. This was originally programmed by Ford in the US to allow their salesmen to show customers through the range, but it was actually a really nippy strategy game too.

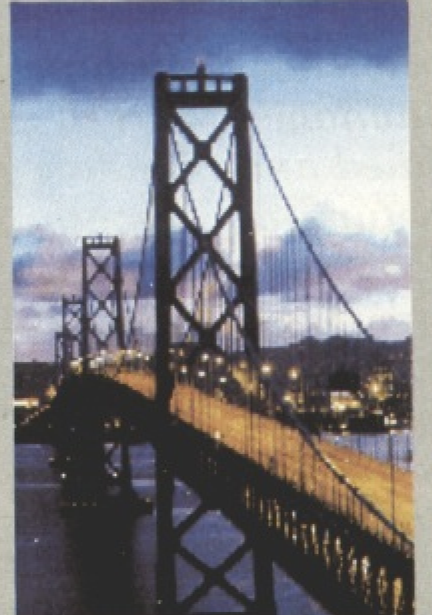
The usual spread of PD text adventures is there too, and these are a little bit more sophisticated on the PC than they are on other computers. One really interesting PC program in this series is the **GAGS**, the **Generic Adventure Game System**, with which you can create your own machine code adventure games with no programming skills whatsoever.

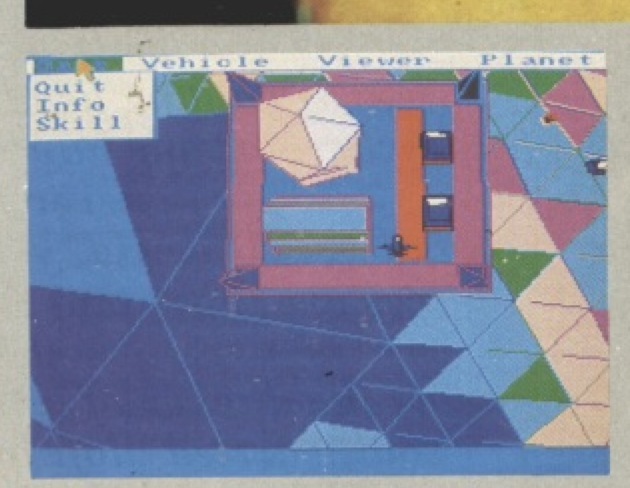
Kingsway also does a five disk set called **The Bible**. It appears that some poor sap has typed in the entire King James Bible, Old and New Testaments in PC readable format for you to load into your word processor! WHAT?!? What's next, the Koran? On second thoughts, perhaps not...

If you Atari owners are feeling a little left out this month, it's because none of the PD libraries bothered to send us any. Anyone wishing to rectify this situation can rest assured that their wares will be received with open disk drives – surely there must be some ST stuff up for grabs...

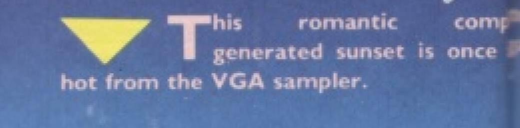
Toucan play at this game (Ouch!). This colourful bird owes its sparkle to digitised VGA of course.







One of the best games on Amiga PD at the moment is Triclops a fast interplanetary strategy game... and if you haven't got it go out and buy it NOW!



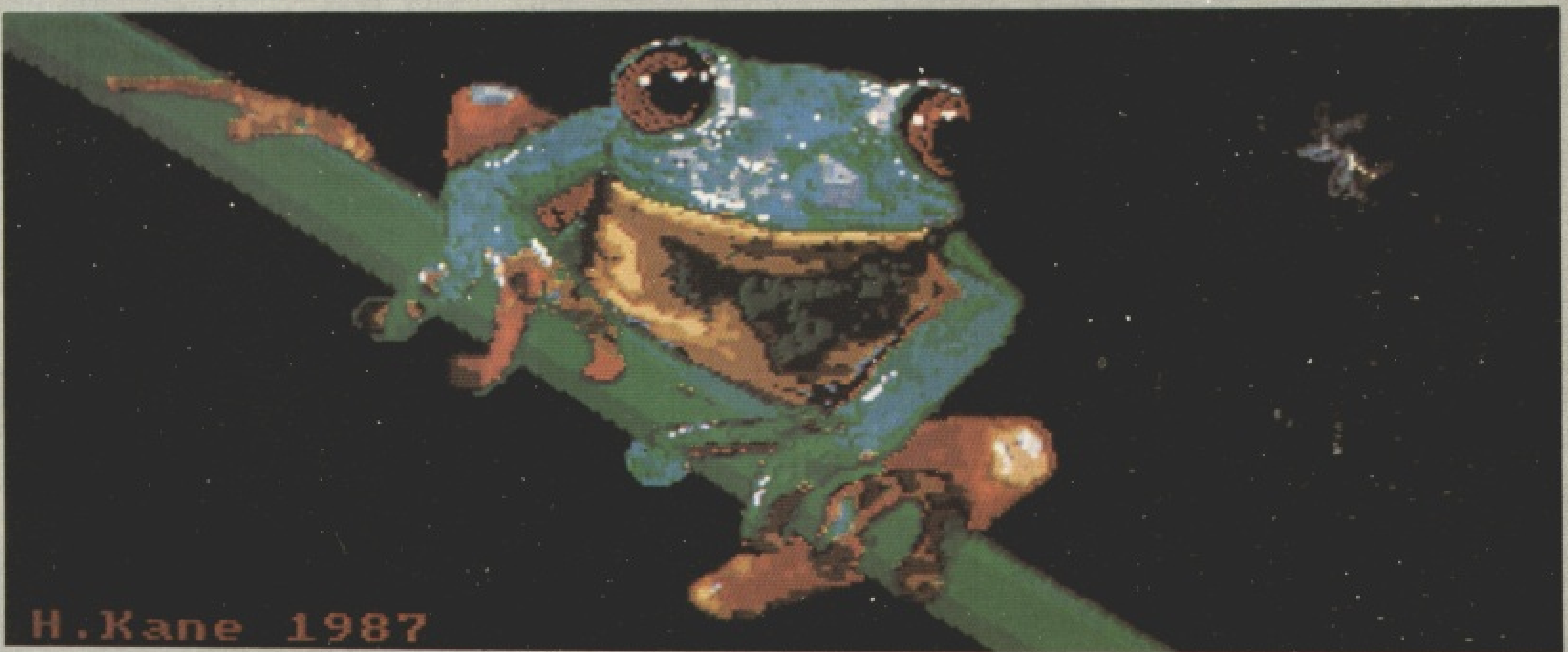
This romantic comp generated sunset is once hot from the VGA sampler.



CONTACT! Brrrrrrrr... this VGA screen is so realistic you have to put on a flying helmet and stick a wire in your scarf.



At first it just sits there and blinks. Then it opens its eyes wide and waits for the fly to pass. Then SLURGULP! It's gone. Amazing. We could watch it for hours. Oh dear, we have.





WHERE TO GO...

The games and stuff from **APDL** are available on Disks 9 and 14 from **Amiga Public Domain Library, 140 Rushdale Road, Sheffield S8 9QE. Tel: (0742) 588429.**

Our **Tree Frog Demo**, although originally from the infamous Fish disks range, was nabbed from the incredible **Ami Exchange Disk Magazine**, which you can get for £9.00 from **Amiga Centre Scotland, 4 Hart Street Lane, Edinburgh EH1 3RN. Tel: 031-557-4242.**

Off the wall chaps **Kingsway** hang out at **140 Rushdale Road, Sheffield S8 9QE. Tel: (0742) 588429**. Wait a minute. Well stap our vitals, if it isn't the same address as APDL.



This month, pixel-pushing Phil South looks into sprites – what they are and how to make them move across your screen.

In any conversation about computer graphics you will constantly hear reference to 'sprites'. These are objects on screen which can pass over backgrounds and leave no trace (a little like Grasshopper in Kung Fu, really!).

Sprites are the little alien blob you shoot at, the bullet you shoot, and your alter ego who fires it. All of them have to be drawn by somebody, and most of them are animated to give an appropriate sense of movement.

Animation is a funny thing, being a combination of many different skills. These are the sorts of things we'll be looking at in depth in later installments, but for now let's check out the basics of movement.



The techniques of animation were developed in 1877 by the early photographer Eadweard Muybridge. The whole thing was really a ghastly mistake, as Muybridge has a row with a mate of his that a horse's feet all left the ground at once when it galloped. A dashed hard thing to prove, at the time. So Muybridge set up a bunch of cameras in a long line and gallped the horse past them setting off the shutters by tripwires. He won the bet and invented animation and cinematography at the same time. Which is only what he did BEFORE breakfast.



The trick with sprite drawing is you have to know how to draw things smaller than you would for a screen sized picture. This sounds obvious, but in fact the technique of, say, drawing a man's face using only a few pixels requires a certain kind of skill. You have to know what certain pixel groups look like at small scale. The effect of small amounts of pixels in the right order are sometimes surprising, and you should practise in magnify mode to sharpen your skills. One trick I use is to pixelise an object (using a function in a paint package) and then shrink it until each square is the size of a pixel.



The sprites from Forgotten Worlds were sketched from the coin-op screen, frame by frame. The original Japanese coin-op artist had to animate these beasties from scratch using techniques more akin to those used by Walt Disney animators than of a graphic artist. One of these techniques is 'tweening', where you draw the start position of a movement and the final position. Then you draw the halfway point, and then the points in between the halfway points and the ends hence the name tweening). You can make the animation as complex as you like by adding more moves between each frame of the animation.

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Armed with only a sackful of shiny silver coins, Brian Nesbitt straps himself in and prepares for the ride of his (sheltered) life...

APACHE 3



LEGEND OF HERO TONMA



HELLFIRE



FIGHTING FANTASY



APACHE 3

Many would say the last chance to make it onto the Sega-style 3D graphics bandwagon has already been missed, but that hasn't put Tatsumi off attempting to generate some high-speed aerial action of its own.

Apache 3 is an unmistakable *Thunderblade* clone – featuring a helicopter gunship fighting through treacherous enemy territory with a massive fire-fight at the end of each level. The only difference between this and Sega's cult hit is the lack of the vertically-scrolling sections and, surprisingly, the more enjoyable gameplay.

For what it's worth, the plot concerns the kidnapping of a group of world leaders by the terrorist group 'Backlash'. The attract sequence tells you to sneak into the enemy base and rescue them, but how a Hughes' AH-64A Apache can 'sneak' anywhere is beyond me. No fancy hydraulics are needed to control the Apache, just a plain helicopter joystick, two triggers and a speed control. This simplicity is matched by a perfect speed balance – it's slower than *Thunderblade* or *Afterburner*, making things easier to control (and you get longer to appreciate the scenery as you pass).

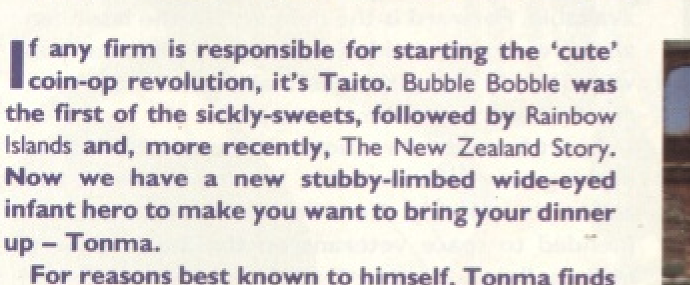
The end-of-level shoot-outs are so large the screen has to scroll horizontally to accommodate them. Level One's (shown here) takes the form of the enemy's communications outpost.



Unlike any of the previous 3D affairs, Apache 3 allows you to boost your weaponry. Red helicopters carry munitions, releasing a packing crate on a parachute when they're shot down. Shoot that and the weapon is yours. Upgrades include a super-cannon and single and double lasers.



LEGEND OF HERO TONMA

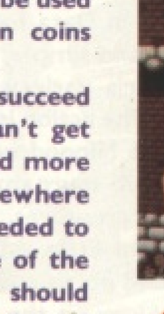


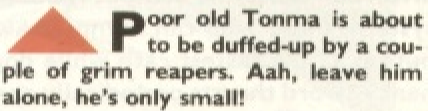
If any firm is responsible for starting the 'cute' coin-op revolution, it's Taito. Bubble Bobble was the first of the sickly-sweets, followed by Rainbow Islands and, more recently, The New Zealand Story. Now we have a new stubby-limbed wide-eyed infant hero to make you want to bring your dinner up – Tonma.

For reasons best known to himself, Tonma finds himself battling against the forces of evil (some of which are cuter than Tonma himself) across a horizontally-scrolling levels 'n' ladders landscape.

Nattily dressed in a superhero costume complete with cape and bright-red booties, Tonma is armed with a bubble-laser that, apart from wasting the evil-doers that accost him, can also be used to break open clay pots, sending golden coins flying everywhere – Super Mario Bros style.

A minimum of grey matter is needed to succeed – it doesn't take much to realise you can't get through a locked door without a key. And more often than not there's one located somewhere around the screen. Dexterity is what's needed to survive, as well as some basic knowledge of the enemy's habits and characteristics, so it should appeal to anyone yearning for the good old days of Mario and Luigi – if they can stand the syrupy look and feel.





Poor old Tonma is about to be duffed-up by a couple of grim reapers. Aah, leave him alone, he's only small!



Much of the enemy threat is on the ground – tanks, trucks, jeeps and landed aircraft all have to be blown away to stay alive. And for bonus points (and spectacular graphic effects) you can strafe the fuel dumps and communication dumps too.





HELL FIRE

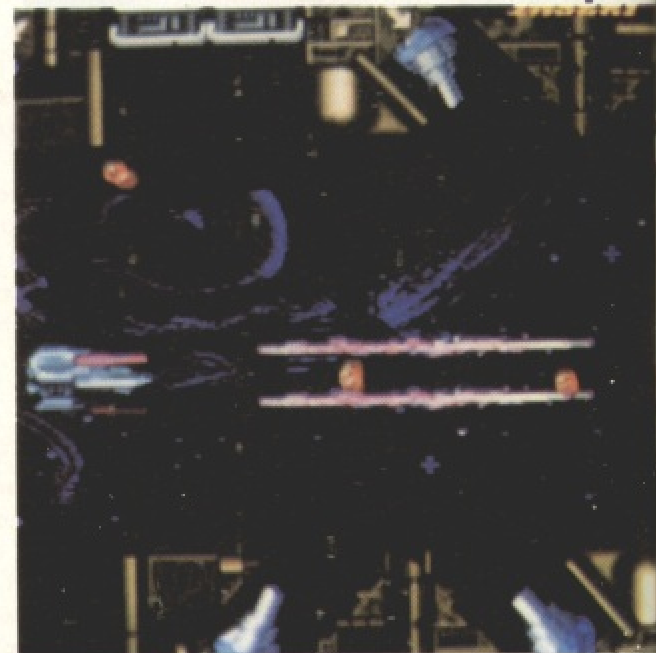


An example of Hellfire's laser direction selection. Here the ship is on maximum firepower, firing away at all four diagonals.

Taito – more often than not known for its original concepts and game designs – has teamed up with Toaplan for this, the latest in a long line of Salamander/R-Type clones. The gameplay veers more towards the former, thanks to the two-player mode and weapon collection system.

When a new weapon is collected, it's represented by a change in the ship's rear end. The more powerful the weapon, the chunkier your backside becomes. A novel touch is provided by an extra button that allows you to select the direction your laser fires by cycling through the options available. Forward is the default, but the laser can also fire directly behind and at any diagnoal you wish (handy for picking off aliens that can't be reached any any other means).

Apart from the direction selection, Hellfire offers nothing new or innovative, but it plays well, the action is suitably frenetic and comes recommended to space veterans on the lookout for a new challenge.



FIGHTING FANTASY



Clash of the Titans meets Ben Hur in Data East's latest. It's a beat 'em up, plain and simple, but not the platform-based Dragon Ninja variety for which the company is best known. The action is set in a colosseum-like arena called the Hippodrome, with you competing in a knock-out tournament against all manner of mythological creatures.

The fighting action is limited and little skill is involved – since the combat is based on an energy system, those who can hammer away on the fire button at the fastest rate while doging the opponent's sword thrusts periodically are most likely to succeed.

The only strategy involved comes in collecting the odd extra weapon and learning the habits of your opponents – for example, the Medusa character whips you with her reptilian tail while the Gargoyle lands on you, digging his claws into your shoulders.

There are some blood-thirsty moments – stay still too long while fighting Medusa and she'll wrap her tail around your stomach and squeeze you so hard you cough up a gallon of blood. But apart from that, the violence is unrealistic and claret-free.

The Gargoyle takes to the air – a quick upward prod with the sword is required to stop him getting any further.





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APOLOGY

A typesetting error on the Turtlesoft advertisement in the June issue of The One caused some confusion over the prices of the games. We would like to apologise for the inconvenience caused both to Turtlesoft and our readers.

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TO BEEB OR

Christina Erskine examines the latest super computer to make it from the drawing board and asks if anything grows from little Acorns...

Imagine a computer with 26 graphics modes (with the ability for users to create their own should they want some particular combination of colours). Imagine that this machine allows you to put 256 colours on-screen at once, from a palette of 4,096, the eight-voice stereo sound comes from two built-in speakers, a 32-bit processor runs at 4,000,000 instructions per second (mips), it's got 1MB memory as standard and it's expandable to 2Mb.

We are, surely, talking about the ultimate games machine for the 1990s, if not the 21st century?

Erm ... not quite.

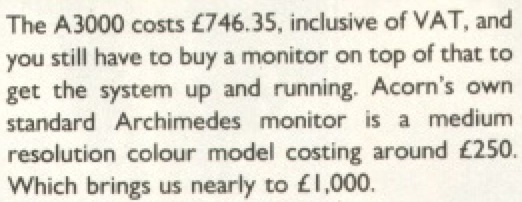
This machine certainly exists. It will be available (in small quantities at first) from July, and the manufacturer is confident that it has hit on an attractive price. Yet no-one should hold their breath waiting for conversions of the latest games. What's the catch?

If you hadn't recognised the spec above, you must be guessing by now that this is an Acorn machine. Which other company would produce a computer which would outperform an Amiga or an ST, and yet leave many of the mainstream leisure software publishers shrugging their shoulders?

> **"If you gave our programmer, Doug, a choice between programming for the rest of his life on an Amiga or an Archimedes – he'd choose the Archimedes."**
>
> Anita Sinclair, Magnetic Scrolls

This is the A3000, Acorn's 'low-cost' addition to its BBC Archimedes series which uses the RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) processor. Here it must be said that Acorn's interpretation of the term 'low-cost' is distinctly at variance with most people's definition.





The A3000 costs £746.35, inclusive of VAT, and you still have to buy a monitor on top of that to get the system up and running. Acorn's own standard Archimedes monitor is a medium resolution colour model costing around £250. Which brings us nearly to £1,000.

Just because the specification of a machine makes a games programmer drool, doesn't mean that the computer in question is going to be sold to the games-playing masses. You can get some superb graphics from a Macintosh, but it's hardly a games machine. The graphics on a PC are pretty naff unless you spend zillions on a VGA card, and yet they think it's a game machine in the USA.

Acorn may hope to sell the A3000 to home users, but the company's corporate communications manager Michael Page stresses that he's talking about *serious* home users and when he cites examples, he conjures up people driving lathes with the machine, or creating their own





NOT TO BEEB?

animated video sequences. Attempting to attain god-like status as you rule over assorted galaxies or piloting a terrifyingly realistic F-15 through flak-ridden skies doesn't even rate a mention.

There is a clue to all this in the name of the beast. The 'A' may stand for Archimedes, and it will almost certainly be known as an Archimedes, but it is actually a BBC A3000.

The truth is that when Acorn talks about reducing costs through restyling a three box computer into a single case and using surface-mounted technology to fit the components to the circuit board, it's schools and cash-strapped education authorities that the company hopes can now benefit.

"Schools tell us that the Archimedes is number one on their wish list", says Michael Page. "They have problems with their budget, they wanted an inexpensive Archimedes, and now they can buy three for the price of two."

He also sees computer-generated music as an area where Archimedes can make significant inroads: "Since the current market leader (he means Atari) seems to be running out of steam." Desktop publishing "for the masses" is another area where Page believes the A3000 can find its niche.

"We'll always focus on education, but we know we have other markets too. We know we don't provide the cheapest machine, but what we can say is that for a given sum of money, we will provide *more* than our competitors do."

Acorn may not particularly care that the likes of **RoboCop, Populous,** or **Falcon** stand little chance of conversion to the machine at the moment. Certainly the companies concerned all complained of a perceived lack of interest from Acorn in their top-selling titles.

Indeed, Ocean's software manager Gary Bracey was quite vociferous on the subject of Acorn's effrontery in attempting to launch a home computer without trying to enlist his support.

"We'd like to do things with Acorn, if only they would show some interest. I don't see why we couldn't do something if only to encourage the user base, although we've no plans to do anything off our own bat. Still, with a little bit of input from Acorn, we may well re-evaluate the situation."

"If we all retired and had lots of money in the bank, then, sure, we'd all get Archimedes and write games for it – but we haven't."

Steve Cain, Frames
(currently developing for Atari)

"Look at **RoboCop.** It's been at the top for five months on every bloody format you can think of – except Archimedes. But no Archimedes owner has ever rung us up to ask when their version is coming out. We've had no feedback – why commit resources when there's no feedback?"

Bracey's gripes were little different from those of Imageworks/Mirrorsoft or Electronic Arts (although perhaps more strongly worded). But for companies which have produced Archimedes programs, and which do get support, Acorn could hardly be more helpful.

Clare's Micro Supplies, a long-term player in the Acorn/BBC arena, has been working on products to suit the A3000 for some time, all with full cooperation and support from Acorn. The company hopes to have a DTP package, sound sampler and flight simulator ready for sale at the Acorn User show, where the A3000 makes its public debut.





And at the currently fashionable programming house, Teque, Shaun Hollingworth (a man who reputedly converts Amiga programs to the Archimedes before breakfast) agrees that Acorn's support and help has been invaluable.

Hollingworth is an Archimedes devotee: "It's four times as fast as an ST, its number-crunching capabilities far exceed those of the Amiga; whatever those machines can do, the Archimedes can do so easily."

He believes that ultimately software houses aren't doing themselves any favours by deciding that the Archimedes might just as well not exist for them: "If software houses are going to be seen to support new technology, then they must be adventurous with computers like the Archimedes."

"When the Amiga first came out, many games were just straight ports over from the ST and you can get away with that. But with the Archie, you cannot rewrite bits of code, you must start again. Well, you can translate the graphics but the program itself must be written in ARM assembler."

This business of rewriting from scratch presents a second problem for would-be Archie developers. It puts coders in much the same position as when the first STs appeared in 1985 – only then, many programmers were bored stiff by the Spectrum and Commodore and itching to get into something innovative. Today, many programmers are still getting to grips with the 68000 and the Amiga's custom chips and aren't quite so willing to abandon them for something else again.

However, it appears the Archimedes sometimes can't win even if a straight conversion is made. At Magnetic Scrolls, where **Fish** and **Corruption** both made brief appearances on the Archimedes, Anita Sinclair claims: "It's really easy to port across because we write all our adventures on a single system anyway," and she *still* doesn't plan any further Archie conversions.

"The A3000 is not going to be a runaway success. RISC in a box may be a very good idea, but it's not suitable for games. On a worldwide basis, the big games markets are the PC, ST, Amiga and the Mac and that's it."

Acorn's entrenchment in the UK market is also off-putting to the large leisure software firms, most of which have interests – if not parent companies – in the European and US markets. "I can't see it taking off in Germany or France, which is 60% of our business. I can't see it knocking the ST or Amiga off their perches anywhere," explained Jonathan Ellis at Electronic Arts.

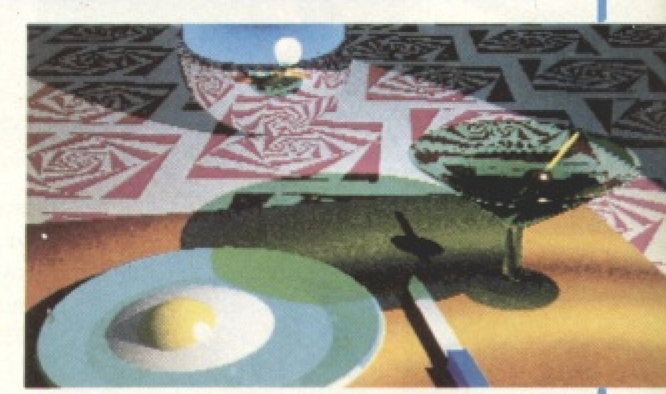


TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Size:	47x33x6.35cm
Processor:	32-bit RISC processor, called ARM (Acorn RISC Machine), running at 8MHz
RAM memory:	1Mb, expandable internally to 2 Mb
Operating system:	RISC/OS, Acorn's own WIMP-based multi-tasking operating system, built into 512K ROM
Disk drive:	One 800K 3.5" drive built into keyboard unit, Amiga-style
Keyboard:	Enhanced IBM PC-style, 103 keys, inclusive of cursor cluster and numeric keypad
Ports:	Analogue RGB Stereo amplifier/headphones socket Mono composite video RS232 serial (need to fit two chips internally to make use of it) Parallel printer Mouse port Expansion bus
Other connections:	Space for Econet card Internal space for user/MIDI port Space for 1Mb RAM expansion
Screen modes:	26 in all, introducing all BBC modes 0-7 and IBM VGA-style mode
Graphics:	4,096 colours altogether max 256 on-screen at once (varies according to screen mode)
Sound:	8 channels, output through two built-in stereo speakers
Software included:	Utilities bundled with the machine include draw and paint programs, BBC emulator, a calculator, and games: **Lander, Patience** and **Puzzle**
Software available:	Compatible with all existing Archimedes titles (some games, but mainly graphics, educational and business programs) Runs (using either of two built-in BBC emulators) all BBC software (mainly old games and educational) With IBM PC emulator (£99 extra) runs all PC software (now you're talking: more business titles than you can count, but also respectable-ish games catalogue)

Yet David Clare, proprietor of Clare's Micro, is more than happy with export sales of his Archimedes titles. "Australia, New Zealand, Holland and Belgium have always been good sellers and the French and German markets are beginning to become active now."

Figures being bandied around at the moment (which are not based on any hard and fast research) say that you should be able to sell around 10,000 of any one title throughout Europe and that Archimedes applications have been selling at around the 2,000-3,000 mark. Hardly a mouth-watering proposition for the would-be chart-topper.



Michael Page claims the Archimedes in all its guises has sold "several tens of thousands" worldwide, three-quarters of these in the UK, and 20% of those going to individuals in the broad category of 'home user'.

If the A3000 is to fulfil David Clare's assertion that it is "a mass-market machine at a realistic price" then a small explosion in Acorn's sales targets would appear to be needed. Still, Page says Acorn received 3,000 advance orders within a week of announcing the machine. Maybe the ball will keep on rolling...





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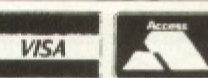
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BACKSPACE

In this, our second interview with a 'major' industry figure, Ciarán Brennan crosses swords with Activision supremo Rod Cousens to see what the future holds for both his company and the industry as a whole.

From the outside, Christmas 1988 appeared to be somewhat disastrous for Activision, with neither Afterburner **nor** R-Type **performing as well as expected. What went wrong?**

"Nothing! Christmas 1988 was a success for Activision and its distrbuted labels including Electric Dreams and System 3. We achieved a healthy market share at a time when the market was at its height, and in terms of competition and chart status it confirmed us as the major contender for achieving a position of leadership."

Well, I suppose that goes to show that things aren't always what they seem. But even if last Christmas was so successful, in the cold light of previous experience, what's your honest opinion of coin-op and film tie-ins? Activision had had its fair share of turkeys over the years – Quartet, Howard The Duck, Wonder Boy...

"Turkeys? **Quartet** and **Wonder Boy** weren't at all disappointing... And judging by how the market performed in 1988 it would suggest that consumer demand for endorsed product is healthy – and indicators are such that it will continue to be so. Licence attachment (which extends to other categories, including sports titles) is a 'hook' to which the consumer can relate. The key is to be selective, and perhaps 1989 will see more critical assessment in acquisition supported by better software development. It's interesting to note that in the 16-bit arena the age range is wider – as is the appeal in the genre of product – and it may be that price levels will see a greater division according to product type."

With the release of ISS, Millennium 2.2, Wicked **and the forthcoming** Bomber, **as well as a number of Strategy/RPG titles, it seems as though Activition could be getting back to its roots as a publisher of original and innovative software. Is this mere chance or a deliberate policy?**

"It's our intent to produce a product mix within our catalogue geared to global market requirements and focusing on specific sectors. This includes the development of original and innovative software – and in fact we've never deviated from this course. This is easily underlined by taking a look at our back catalogue, and its exploitation by third party publishers.

Here at Activision, we have never failed to have vision or a progressive and pioneering outlook in addressing emerging technologies which hold much excitement in the industry."

But going back to the subject of licensed titles for a moment, doubts have been expressed in certain quarters about the forthcoming conversions of Sega's Galaxy Force **– if anything it should be more difficult to reproduce than, say,** Afterburner. **Can you pull it off?**

"The best advertisement for **Galaxy Force** will be the game itself. Development has started well in advance of the publication date and is in the hands of a programming team of considerable reputation – who



will receive the merit they deserve when the game's released. Believe me, **Galaxy Force** will be a much sought after addition to any computer owner's software collection."

The computer software industry suffered heavily in the early eighties when the home consoles originally took off. How will it survive the 'second coming' of the consoles that's currently being predicted?

"In certain quarters it's believed that the home computer industry was born out of the console market in terms of an entertainment medium and advanced from there. Consoles would perhaps be weighed up as more aligned to the toy market addressing a new generation of consumer. If you look at the consoles that are likely to appear, initially 8-bit and then in 16-bit form, they will be quite advanced when compared to existing 16-bit computers. It stands to reason therefore, that in order to compete, today's computers will become available in a modified design (with the exclusion of a keyboard) and offering compatibility with existing software at keener prices. It will certainly be a competitive and aggressive area and Japanese companies will feature more prominently than before. There are also interesting and exciting developments with regard to CD applications on consoles which only goes to prove the fast changing nature of the business. Possibly the most exciting development in the immediate future though will be the emergence of 'hand-helds' offering amazing graphics and sound with complete portability. An interesting point for debate concerns the position of Amstrad and whether they will concentrate on MS-DOS compatibles, or whether they will seek to enter the low end, either through their own development or 'badging' an existing machine. Whatever the outcome, home and personal computers will continue to progress and go beyond cyclical trends and it would well be that MS-DOS compatibles steadily increase their installed base whilst other 16-bit computers gain distribution through more specific channels such as creative agencies and music outlets, albeit in an enhanced form. This will further demonstrate a crossover of industries occuring as we participate in a world of entertainment, information and communications. It is a tremendously exciting prospect."

The hardware market is due for a shake-up in the very near future, with the development of CD Rom and the release of the Konix machine and the low-end Archimedes. How will Activision decide when (or indeed if) to start supporting these new formats?

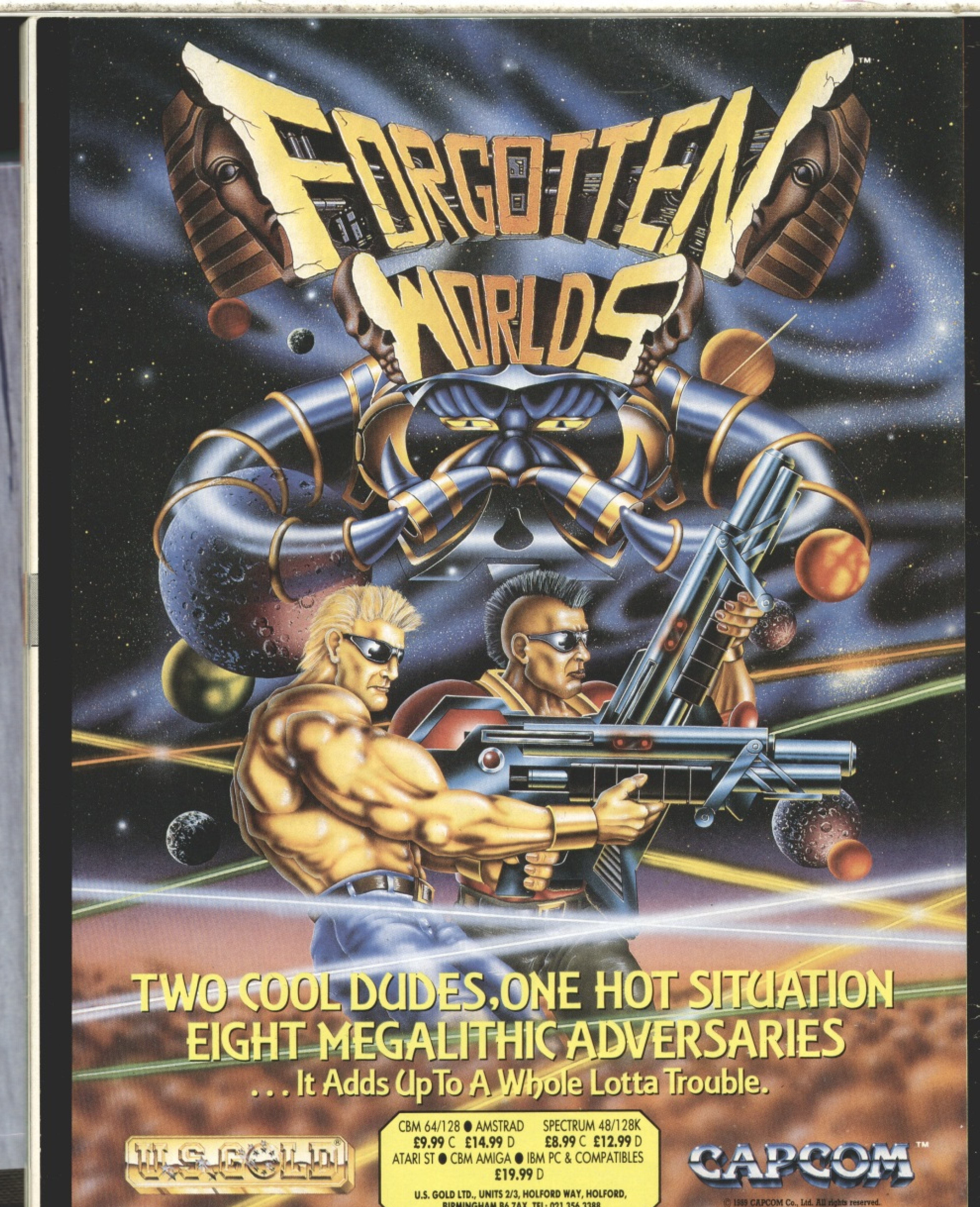
"In certain instances Activision has already taken a decision to support emerging hardware configurations. Being part of a global company, we do have the advantage of being able to call on a catalogue which also takes in Apple computers, MS-DOS compatibles and programmable games machines. We have always been known to be an early entrant as far as hardware systems are concerned. We arrive at a decision based on market research, negotiations with the manufacturer, anticipated costs and, to some extent, intuition. It is also a question of where best to apply resources and focus attention to get the best results. "

How do you see the games market developing in the future – firstly over the next year or so, and also further ahead?

"The games market will see some maturity at the higher end as consumers upgrade in hardware, enjoy a higher disposable income and change their tastes. An example of this is the Sierra-on-Line product line up which has a large following in Europe through the release of programs such as the **Kings Quest** series and **Leisure Suit Larry II.** Cartridge-based product will, of course, be subject to higher price points in a range of £20-30 each, with Rom-Card applications at around £15. It is likely that in the mass market of 16-bit computers, a price point of about £15 for arcade action will be arrived at in the future, subject to it being warranted through achievable volume. The market could position itself in such a way as to be divided between hand-helds (as a short-term addition), consoles and MS-DOS compatibles. To a large degree this will be dictated by technological change in the area of optical disk technology and the crossover of industries such as film, record and book publishing businesses which again explains the utilisation of movies and other endorsements. In some ways it is the beginning, whilst in other ways it is a case of what goes round comes round. Whatever it is, there is never a dull moment and it is extremely motivating in contemplating a future which holds no bounds."

Next month, top coder Andrew Braybrook takes to the chair to discuss, among other things, his recent work on the conversion of Rainbow Islands **– so if you've got any questions for Andy, you know where to send them.**




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